

REACHING A BIBLICALLY BASED MARITAL LIFE AMONG JORDANIAN
CHRISTIAN COUPLES: DEALING WITH MOTHER IN LAW-DAUGHTER IN LAW
CONFLICT

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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OCTOBER, 2006

REACHING A BIBLICALLY BASED MARITAL LIFE

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	vi
Abstract	vii
CHAPTER ONE THE USAGE OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT) TO HELP JORDANIAN CHRISTIAN COUPLES IN DEALING WITH THE INFLUENCE OF THE HUSBAND’S FAMILY OF ORIGIN ON THEIR MARITAL LIFE, ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF MOTHER IN LAW-DAUGHTER IN LAW CONFLICTS	1
Mother in Law-Daughter in Law Conflict from the Cultural Viewpoint of Jordanian Arab Society	2
The Special Relationship between Mothers and Their Sons in the Arab Societies	2
The Role of the Family of Origin in the Selection of Their Son’s Future Wife ..	3
The Main Reason for the Wives’ Acceptance of Their In Laws Intervention in Their Marital Lives	9
A Field Study.....	10
Results of Field Study	11
Conclusions Regarding the Field Study	13
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	14
The Usage of CBT to Help Couples	16
Tools	16
Goals	17
Some Typical Automatic Thoughts amongst Couples who are in Conflict ..	18
Techniques	20
CHAPTER TWO BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS	24
Covenant: Definition, History and Relation to Marriage	27
Covenant in Ancient Times	28
Covenant in the Old Testament	28

REACHING A BIBLICALLY BASED MARITAL LIFE

Covenant in the New Testament.....	30
Marriage is a Covenant.....	30
The Responsibilities and the Roles of the Husband and the Wife	33
The Love of the Husband	36
The Submission of the Wife	38
The Role of the Husband	38
The Role of the Wife	40
Honoring Parents and the Relationship between the Married Son and His Mother..	40
Honoring In Laws and the Relationship between the Daughter in Law and Her Mother in Law	43
Communication, Anger Management, Forgiveness and Conflict Resolution	44
Communication.....	44
Anger Management and Forgiveness	48
Conflict Resolution.....	51
CHAPTER THREE LITERATURE REVIEW	53
The Sociological and Cultural Studies	54
The Psychotherapeutic Studies.....	58
The Biblical and Theological Studies.....	63
CHAPTER FOUR CASE STUDY: THE STUDY OF HANNAN FAMILY	74
Hannan Family	74
The Background of Sawsan	74
The Background of Aman	77
The History of the Relationship of Aman and Sawsan.....	80
Tania and Toleen	84
The Spiritual Life of the Couple.....	85
The Current Relationship of Aman and Sawsan.....	85

REACHING A BIBLICALLY BASED MARITAL LIFE

Ongoing Issues.....	85
Assessment	87
The Pre Counseling Session	87
A Three-Generation Family Map (Genogram).....	87
Results of Questionnaires	88
Two Individual Sessions.....	90
Second Conjoint Session	90
Problem Areas	91
The Treatment Plan	92
Setting Goals for Therapy	92
Long Term Goals	92
Short Term Goals.....	93
Techniques for Recognizing, Labeling, Testing and Dismissing Automatic Thoughts	94
Communication Skills	95
Anger Management	98
The Meaning of Covenant in Marriage	99
The Responsibilities of Aman and Sawsan as Husband and Wife	100
The Roles of Aman and Sawsan as Husband and Wife.....	101
Honoring Parents and In Laws	101
Forgiveness	102
Conflict Resolution.....	103
CHAPTER FIVE OUTCOMES	104
The Jordanian Culture	104
Integration between Theological, Biblical and Therapeutic Foundations	107
Comments on the Case Study.....	109

REACHING A BIBLICALLY BASED MARITAL LIFE

Assessment	109
Setting the Counseling Objectives	110
Progress of Counseling Sessions	111
Outcomes	114
Personal Assessment	116
Conclusion	119
Recommendations	121
APPENDIX A QUESTIONNAIRE.....	123
APPENDIX B BELIEFS ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP	127
APPENDIX C PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN COMMUNICATION.....	130
APPENDIX D PROBLEMS IN THE STYLE OF COMMUNICATION	132
APPENDIX E THE FAMILY MAP OF HANNAN FAMILY	134
REFERENCES	135
AUTHOR VITAE KHALED M. FREIJ.....	143

REACHING A BIBLICALLY BASED MARITAL LIFE

Acknowledgments

The goodness of God is so great. He is faithful. The earth is filled with His love. His name be praised and glorified at all times.

I am so thankful to my instructors, professors Sidney Bradley and Raymond Pendleton. They reflected Christ in their love and care. They willingly shared their information and great experiences in counseling ministry with us. I learned a lot from them. The results of their teaching and mentoring will always appear in my ministry with others. I am also grateful to all the staff of D. Min. office at GCTS, especially to Ms. Bridget Erickson and Mrs. Trish King.

I am eternally thankful to my wife, Rana, and to my two daughters, Joelle and Jessica. Rana supported me to the maximum throughout this great experience that has transformed my life. She is my best friend and my better half. She encouraged me a lot to take a further step to accomplish one of my dreams in this life. She inspired me a lot with her love, patience and prayers. Also, the love of Joelle and Jessica motivated me and gave me the strength and the determination to complete the program.

REACHING A BIBLICALLY BASED MARITAL LIFE

Abstract

This thesis applies integration between theology and cognitive behavioral therapy. Its aim is to help Jordanian Christian couples who have marital conflicts, because of the intervention of the husband's family of origin (especially his mother), to reach a better marital life. In Jordanian culture, parents demand their son's obedience, even after his marriage. Also, the husband's parents expect that their daughter in law will serve them. These two issues together create conflicts among marital couples and affect their marital life negatively. Throughout therapy couples can change their negative beliefs into positive ones and understand the biblical truth concerning their marriages. Accordingly, the biblical truth dominates over the cultural truth without hurting it, and the couples' marital life becomes better.

CHAPTER ONE

THE USAGE OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT) TO HELP JORDANIAN CHRISTIAN COUPLES IN DEALING WITH THE INFLUENCE OF THE HUSBAND'S FAMILY OF ORIGIN ON THEIR MARITAL LIFE, ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF MOTHER IN LAW-DAUGHTER IN LAW CONFLICTS

In the Jordanian culture, people usually follow their emotions. Therefore, it is very important in this culture to recognize that love by itself does not build the substance of marital relationship. The individual's qualities along with personal skills are necessary for sustaining and developing the relationship. The essential individual qualities needed for a happy marital relationship are as follows: “commitment, sensitivity, generosity, consideration, loyalty, responsibility, trustworthiness.” (Beck, 1988, 5)

In order to help their marriages to grow and to be mature, couples need to accept each other, to accept each other's faults and mistakes, and to forgive each other. The major skills that each couple need for a healthy marital relationship are their ability to work on joint plans together, to take their decisions together and to understand and enjoy each other more. (Beck, 1988)

Through the usage of cognitive therapy, couples who are in marital conflict because of mother in law-daughter in law conflict can work together with a therapist to reach a better marital life where the husband can understand his wife as well as help her to feel secure in their marriage and to give her the first social priority in his life.

Mother in Law-Daughter in Law Conflict from the Cultural Viewpoint of Jordanian Arab Society

In Jordanian culture, the husband's family of origin intervenes greatly in his marital life. The husband's parents demand their son's obedience even after his marriage. In addition, the husband's parents (especially the mother) expect their daughter in law to serve them. These two issues together create conflicts in the marriage, and the husband is usually stuck in the middle between his mother and his wife. Furthermore, these issues negatively affect the marital couple and make their life a life of conflict.

Ellis and Harper (1961) mentioned that marital conflicts for a high percentage of those who seek their marital counseling in the States every year are as a result of considerable in law problems. In Jordan, as in other Arab societies, in law problems especially mother in law-daughter in law problems are considered the main reason for many marital conflicts.

The Special Relationship between Mothers and Their Sons in the Arab Societies

Lahaye (2002) mentioned that mothers usually find it very difficult to give up their sons. In the Arab world, the husband's mother frequently considers her son as her own property because the female learns during her growing up that in order to be a successful wife she should mainly deliver a baby boy to the family. Consequently, the new wife feels that she has successfully performed her first and main task after marriage when she delivers the first baby boy. (Sharabi, 1981)

Parents perceive their sons, not their daughters, as their source of security in their old age. Mohamed Karoui describes the feeling of a Tunisian male who wonders how he could find love in his family or his environment and how he could feel fulfilled when his

culture restricts his presence in life to merely being the contributor to his family's continuity and his parents' old age insurance! (Cited in Sharabi, 1981, 31).

In addition, the mother considers her sons very important to her because she is the main one who raises her children through all their stages of growth. Mostly the father does not show a serious interest in raising his children until they become grown-up. The father will bother with his sons when he wants to play with them or to ask them to greet his guests. Therefore, the mother's continuous care and interest are directed towards her sons considering them a gain to the family. In contrast, mothers give their daughters their love and care, but do not put them in the first place like the sons in the patriarchal society of Arab countries. Unfortunately, many families consider the daughter as a burden to the family. It is rare to find the daughter taking the first place in the families' concern if she has male siblings. Furthermore, the mother is the person who plays the main role in forming the character of her sons. One of the main points that the sons learn in their childhood is to be faithful to their parents and to be obligated to them, especially to be obligated to their mother, for every thing they have achieved in their life. (Sharabi, 1981)

The Role of the Family of Origin in the Selection of Their Son's Future Wife

The son's family of origin generally has to approve his selection of his wife and many times they personally choose their son's wife (Obaidat, n.d.). There is a general unanimity among Arab sociologists that Arab families keep on caring for, and supporting their children, through their adult life. Additionally, the family of origin considers the son, who wants to be independent from them, as a kind of deviant in Jordanian culture. Also, the family of origin considers itself as the guardian of the son even after his marriage. The age of the male's economic independence in Arab societies is at least

twenty five. Moreover, many times the male passes the age of twenty five and he works for two or three years, but he cannot take the step of marriage because of having insufficient income. Therefore, he needs his father's financial support to be able to get married. This issue gives the father more authority in choosing his son's future wife. The father- along with other members of the family of origin- chooses the son's future wife even though many times the son is not happy with that choice. The son's reaction to that choice usually appears after marriage in the form of conflict in his marital relationship. In short, sons are forced to accept their family of origin's choice of their future wives when they are not financially ready to get married. (Hijazi, 1978; Thaher, 1985) In addition to that, the son in our Jordanian society still depends on his mother to choose his future wife for him. Moreover, the son and his selected bride make the decision of marriage in their first meeting within fifteen minutes! Therefore, most of the new marriages face problems. (Hanahneh, February 5, 2006)

Usually, strong bonds exist between family members in Jordanian society, especially in Jordanian villages; therefore, the husband's family of origin considers their son's marriage as an extension of their family. (Haraka, 1989) Consequently, the husband's mother expects full submission and obedience from her daughter in law. This expectation leads to several conflicts in the mother in law-daughter in law relationship as well as a lot of conflicts between the marital couple.

Lots of times the husband's family of origin chooses their son's wife from their relatives. Marriages between relatives are very popular in Jordan and the Arab world. In a study about consanguineous marriage in Jordan, Khoury and Massad (1992) interviewed around two thousand Jordanian families. The results were as follows:

32.03% of marriages were first cousin marriages, 6.8% of marriages were second cousin marriages, 10.5% of marriages were distant relative marriages and 50% of marriages were non- relative marriages. From this study, it is evident that marriages between relatives still occupy a high percentage of marriages in Jordan. Usually Arabs, including Jordanians, think that males should have priority to marry their female relatives.

There are many reasons that have enforced marriage between relatives in Jordan. For instance, families prefer internal marriages between relatives over external marriages from outside the extended family. Also, the extended family members live in the same geographical area. Moreover, people give a special status to their extended family and they perceive it as their preferred family model. Furthermore, people are inclined to marry their relatives to preserve the property within the family. Finally, people feel secure socially and economically when they live with their relatives. (Omar, 1994)

The main character that the husband's family of origin searches for in his wife is her obedience. The wife's obedience according to the husband's family of origin means that she should be in agreement with them in all their decisions. This idea comes in agreement with a popular Jordanian proverb "Qaird mwalif wala ghazal mkhalif [A monkey in agreement is better than a deer in disagreement]", which means that beauty is not an important issue in the wife's selection by comparison with her obedience to her future husband and his family. (Haraka, 1989) Accordingly, the family of origin demands respect in our Jordanian community; therefore, there is no way by which the wife can criticize, even positively, her husband's family of origin. Also, she can not express her true feelings towards them. Consequently, she hides her true feelings towards her husband's family of origin because she does not want to be in conflict with

her husband and his family of origin as Jamal Al-Khateeb, a Jordanian psychiatrist, has mentioned. (Al-Sarhan, 2005)

The second major character that the husband's family of origin looks for in the future wife is that she serves them and her husband. They also expect the future wife of their son to keep the house clean and comfortable by waking up early to do the house work (Haraka, 1989).

On the other hand, the bride's family asks for the presence, approval and blessing of the bridegroom's family of origin at the meeting where the bridegroom proposes marriage to their daughter, as a condition of accepting the proposal. The bride's family of origin considers that the presence of the bridegroom's family, when proposing marriage to their daughter, is very important for various reasons. For example, they see the presence, approval and blessing of the bridegroom's family of origin as insurance for their daughter's future, especially if the bridegroom does not have enough money to be financially independent of his parents. Moreover, they demand the presence of the bridegroom's family of origin during the marriage proposal, in order to feel that they are not lower socially than the bridegroom's family of origin, who usually are not present during the proposal if they do not approve of their son's choice. Also, according to Jordanian culture, the individual male does not choose his wife alone, but all his family of origin as one unit works to help him in choosing his future mate. There are some changes in this rule nowadays, especially because some males choose to marry foreign wives. Finally, before the 1970's, the Jordanian family was equivalent to the extended family that consists of the parents, the grandparents and the married sons. The newly

married couple used to live in the same house with the husband's extended family until they left to live in a separate house. (Obaidat, n.d.)

Nowadays, many sons live in their separate houses, immediately after marriage. However, many families build apartments for their sons in the same building where they live in order to keep their sons near them. Furthermore, others are still doing the same as in the 1970's and live in the same house as their extended families due to economic reasons. In addition, if the sons do not live with their families of origin in the same apartment or in a different apartment in the same building, they mostly choose to live in the same neighborhood of their families of origin.

Haraka (1989) clarified that when we tackle the mother in law-daughter in law relationship in the Arab society in general and in the Jordanian society in particular, we mean the relationship between the husband's mother and his wife. That is because it is common in the Jordanian society that after the marriage of the son, he either lives with his family of origin or close to them.

According to Hussein Mahadeen (a Jordanian sociologist), the reason for mother in law-daughter in law conflict from the sociological viewpoint is the post marital changes that may occur in the emotional and practical roles that the son used to play in relation to his mother before his marriage. These changes lead to coolness in the son's relationship with his mother (Al-Rishiq, 2005).

Concerning the husband's attitude towards the mother in law-daughter in law conflict, Al-Rishiq (2005) mentioned, through an interview with a wife who is in conflict with her mother in law, that the husband tries as much as possible to avoid being with

both his mother and his wife at the same time. Furthermore, the wife mentioned that she always tries to avoid talking to her mother in law in order to avoid problems.

The writer of this thesis project has counseled a Jordanian couple whose conflict is mainly a result of mother in law-daughter in law conflict. In one of the counseling sessions, the wife said that after 19 years of marriage she discovered that the solution to her marital problems is to avoid talking to her mother in law. When the counselor asked the husband about his opinion of his wife's solution, he discovered that the husband perceives his wife's reaction as a negative attitude towards his mother. Then, when the counselor asked him about the husband's personal attitude towards the mother-wife conflict, he found that the husband is dividing his time between his wife and his mother saying that his solution works for him! The husband was serious, and both of them think that this is the solution to their marital conflicts that have never ended. This case is just a sample of the reactions of marital couples in Jordan that illustrate the mother in law-daughter in law conflicts.

Concerning the effect of mothers in law on marital couples, Haraka (1989) wrote about the results of a questionnaire regarding the relationship between the marital couple and their mothers in law. The people who filled in the questionnaire described the marital couple-mothers in law relationships as follows: conflict, hatred, a terrible relationship, hardship, hell... etc.

A Jordanian proverb describes the love of the mother in law towards her daughter in law as the scorpion's bite. This proverb reflects an unlimited hatred between the mother in law and her daughter in law. Moreover, this unlimited hatred expands to include the husband's sisters who support their mother in her conflict with their brother's

wife. The entire husband's family of origin blames him for marrying his wife, whom they consider as the main source of conflicts and problems in the family. The main reason for the mother in law-daughter in law conflict is that the mother in law considers that her son is her own property and that her daughter in law has stolen that property from her. In general, most Jordanian males believe that they have to obey and respect their fathers as well as to obey, support and help their mothers all through their lives. (Haraka, 1989)

The Main Reason for the Wives' Acceptance of Their In Laws Intervention in Their Marital Lives

It is worthwhile to portray here the main reason behind the wives' tolerance and acceptance of the intervention of their in laws in their marital relationships. Some wives in our Jordanian society accept and tolerate the negative interventions of their in laws in their marital relationship because they are afraid that their husbands will divorce them if they do otherwise. Our society makes the divorced woman at fault, and it mainly blames the wife for the divorce. Hence, understanding biblical truth and working on the marital relationship will help these marital couples to avoid divorce or separation. In a Jordanian study about divorce, the negative influences of in laws are among the main reasons for divorce in the Jordanian society (Khatatbeh, 2000). The number of divorces is increasing every year in Jordan. According to a study about divorce that Al-Afaf charity association has done recently, there were 10373 divorces in Jordan out of 58000 marriages in the year 2004. (Hanahneh, February 5, 2006)

The relatives and neighbors of the divorced woman put all of her behavior and actions under the microscope. Furthermore, divorced women face many psychological,

sociological and financial problems. A local Jordanian newspaper published an interview with one of the Jordanian divorced ladies who said that: “The society has stolen my freedom and judged me to be dead although I am still alive. My family of origin has deprived me of work because of the society’s view of me as a divorced woman.” (Hanahneh, February 2, 2006)

A Field Study

In order to find out the reality of the relationship between the husband’s parents (especially his mother) and his wife in the Jordanian society, the writer of this thesis project distributed a questionnaire that covers the influence of the husband’s parents on the husband’s marital life in the Jordanian cultural setting (see Appendix A). He randomly distributed this questionnaire through the evangelical churches in three major cities (Amman, Zarka and Irbid) to a sample of 150 married persons (65 males and 85 females). The age of the sample ranges between 19 and 68 years old. The age percentage of the sample was as follows: 20% were between 18 and 29 years old, 36% were between 30 and 39 years old, 40% were between 40 and 64 years old and 4% were 65 years old and above.

Concerning the sample’s years of marriage, 36% (54 persons) are married for less than 10 years and 64% (96 persons) are married for more than 10 years (between 11 and 44 years of marriage). Regarding the sample’s geographical place of living, 76% (114 persons) live geographically close to the husband’s family of origin as follows: 13.3% (20 persons) are living in the same house of the husband’s family of origin, 24% (36 persons) are living in the same building of the husband’s family of origin and 38.7% (58 persons) are living in the same neighborhood area of the husband’s family of origin.

Results of Field Study

The results of the questionnaire led to the following conclusions:

1. There is a high intervention of the husband's family of origin in their son's marital life. The percentage was as follows: 18% very high intervention, 52% high, 20% moderate and 6% low.
2. This intervention is negative to a great extent: 26% very high negative intervention, 44% high, 24% moderate and 6% low.
3. There is a high percentage of belief among married sons that they have to continue their obedience to their parents after their marriage. The percentage was as follows: 20% very high, 50% high, 18% moderate and 12% low.
4. There are high expectations from the husband's family of origin for their daughter in law to serve them as well as to serve their son. The percentage was as follows: 22% very high, 48% high, 20% moderate and 10% low.
5. The results reflected a great extent of mother in law-daughter in law conflict and to a great extent this conflict leads to marital conflict. The results of the existence of a mother in law-daughter in law conflict were as follows: 21% very high, 49% high, 19% moderate and 11% low. Furthermore, the results showed that mother in law-daughter in law conflicts leads to marital conflicts were as follows: 36% very high, 46% high, 12% moderate and 6% low.

6. The results reflected that the husband is to a great extent trapped in the middle between satisfying his wife and satisfying his mother. These results came as follows: 24% very high, 40% high, 24% moderate and 12% low.
7. Mother in law-daughter in law conflict was to a great extent a product of the Jordanian culture's influence on the marital relationship. The results of the questionnaire were as follows: 23% very high, 57% high, 20% moderate and 0% low.
8. According to the results of the questionnaire, the key for solving mother in law-daughter in law conflict was as follows:
 - A. From great to very great extent the key solution is that the mother in law stops intervening in her son's marital life. The results were as follows: 44% very high, 32% high, 20% moderate and 4% low.
 - B. From great to very great extent the key solution is that the wife understands that the intervention of her mother in law in her marital life is the outcome of our Jordanian culture. The results were as follows: 30% very high, 32% high, 20% moderate and 18% low.
 - C. From low to moderate extent the key solution is in the husband's attitude towards this conflict. The results were as follows: 10% very high, 18% high, 34% moderate and 38% low.
 - D. To a very great extent the key solution is to understand the biblical truth about the husband's relationship with his parents and his

relationship with his wife. The results were as follows: 64% very high, 20% high, 12% moderate and 4% low.

Conclusions Regarding the Field Study

From all the above, it is clear that there is a high percentage of Jordanian Christian couples who have in laws interventions that affect their marital relationships. Moreover, it is evident that these interventions are highly negative and cause marital conflicts resulting especially from the mother in law-daughter in law conflict. It is also clear that parents expect their son to continue to obey them even after marriage, and that they expect their daughter in law to serve them and to serve their son.

The results of the questionnaire indicate that many people thought that the key to solving marital conflicts that came out of in laws problems, especially mother in law-daughter in law conflict, is for the mother in law stops her intervention in her son's marital life and/or when the wife understands that the intervention of her mother in law in her marital life is the outcome of our Jordanian culture. On the other hand, not many people recognized that the husband's attitude towards this conflict is the main key to solving this conflict. Most of the sample agreed that the main key to solving these conflicts is the knowledge of biblical truth concerning the relationship of the husband with his parents and concerning his relationship with his wife.

Therefore, it is very important that Jordanian Christian couples understand the biblical truth about marriage and reach a good marital relationship without challenging Jordanian culture. This biblical understanding, side by side with working on improving their marital relationship through counseling, helps the couple to have a strong marital relationship.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy, according to Beck, depends on the idea that says that peoples' thoughts, self talks, directions, opinions and standards are very important matters that are related to peoples' behavior. People respond to the events in their lives according to the meanings that they give to these events. For that reason, different people have different responses towards the same event in their lives and also the response of an individual is different from time to time towards the same event. (Al-Zo'bi, 2003)

Therefore, there is a direct connection between (a) our thoughts and beliefs and (b) our physical reactions, behaviors, and moods in the different situations of our lives (Greenberger & Padesky, 1995).

Beck points out the necessity of getting down to the client's core beliefs. The main part of the therapeutic effort is devoted to help the client to be aware of his/her core beliefs. (Jones & Butman, 1991) Cognitive behavioral therapy aims to make the processing of defective information accurate as well as assisting clients to adjust their core beliefs that preserve maladaptive feelings and behaviors. The crucial goals for cognitive behavioral therapy are to eliminate systematic biases that people have in their thinking and to change their core beliefs that incline them to future distress. (Corsini & Wedding, 2000) Consequently, by the usage of cognitive therapy, the therapist gets to the client's emotions through his/her thinking. By adjusting the clients' incorrect beliefs, the therapist reduces or changes the client's unsuitable, excessive emotional reactions. (Beck, 1976)

People build their wrong judgments on deeply rooted habits that they usually are not conscious of. Therefore, they need to take a number of steps in order to correct them.

First, they must be conscious of what they are thinking. Second, they need to distinguish their awry thoughts and then replace their inaccurate judgments with accurate ones. Finally, they need feedback to notify them whether their adjustments are correct. This sequence is not only needed for making intellectual changes, but also for making behavioral changes. (Beck, 1976)

In view of the previous concepts, by the usage of cognitive behavioral therapy, clients can be aware of their automatic thoughts that could be memories, images or words through recognizing their strong feelings or responses to something (Greenberger & Padesky, 1995). Automatic thoughts are just thoughts that could be true or false.

By distinguishing their automatic thoughts, clients could be aware of what is going on through their mind and of what is causing their feelings, and then they start seeking evidence to support their hot thoughts and confirm their conclusions. After that, clients start to think of alternative or balanced thoughts. After going through this process, clients start testing their alternative or balanced thoughts. The increase of the clients' belief in their alternative or balanced thoughts leads to more stability in the clients' improved mood. Moreover, clients need to learn how to recognize and evaluate their assumptions and core beliefs exactly as they learned to recognize and evaluate their automatic thoughts. The change in clients' maladaptive assumptions and core beliefs (a) reduce clients' distress and (b) change their behavior in an easier way that is faithful to their new beliefs. (Greenberger & Padesky, 1995) In short, people's change in their cognitions as well as their way of processing information leads to positive alteration in their feelings and behaviors (Baucom, Epstein, & Lataillade, 2002).

The Usage of CBT to Help Couples

In this thesis project, the counselor is using the cognitive behavioral therapy approach to help a Jordanian couple whose marital conflicts are a result of considerable in-laws problems, especially mother in law-daughter in law conflict. By using the cognitive behavioral therapy, he can effectively help couples with such problems. The length of treatment for helping a couple in such a case will be from 12 to 20 sessions because cognitive behavioral therapy is generally a short term therapy (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990). One of the main steps to start helping couples who are in conflict because of mother in law-daughter in law conflict through using the cognitive behavioral therapy, is to help those couples to discover their beliefs about their relationship.

By using the cognitive behavioral therapy with couples, therapists help couples to feel and to behave differently toward their relationship. The therapists use cognitive behavioral therapy to help couples think in a different way than they used to do. The first step that couples need to do for their cognitive restructuring is to recognize their maladaptive cognitions. Specifically, couples need to figure out their negative automatic thoughts as well as their irrational beliefs. Then, their maladaptive cognitions will turn to be more functional. Subsequently, couples will replace their maladaptive cognitions by other more adaptive cognitions. (Hooper & Dtyden, 1991)

Tools

One of the good tools to do that is to ask the partners in conflict to fill the form “Beliefs about Your Relationship” from Beck (1988, pp. 88f) (see Appendix B). Furthermore, the writer of this thesis project believes that one of the main issues that exacerbate problems among couples whose problems are mainly because of mother in

law-daughter in law conflict is lack of communication. Therefore, asking couples in conflict to fill out the forms “Problems in the Style of Communication” and “Psychological Problems in Communication” from Beck (1988, pp. 111-113) (see Appendices C & D) is very helpful to help them to identify the problems that couples have in communication and to start helping them to strengthen their communication skills. Dattilio and Padesky (1990) describe a couple’s difficulty in communication as the most regular and destructive problem. Most couples in conflict link good communication with agreement, whereas good communication does not automatically mean agreement.

Goals

It is important to clarify to the partners who are in conflict the importance of setting goals that they need to reach in order to work on solving their conflicts. When the couple and the counselor set goals and agree on them and clarify the way to achieve them, the counseling process will be more effective and faster. Clients usually think of general goals. The general goals have to involve changes in the clients’ life, have to be under the clients’ control and have to be realistic. The therapist and the couple prioritize the general goals. It is the role of the therapist to help the clients to divide the general goals into particular goals that the clients and the therapist can evaluate together.

(Padesky & Greenberger, 1995)

Long-Term Goals. The therapist will help the couple under conflict to set long-term goals to reach. These goals will help them to achieve a better marital life. One of these long-term goals is to reduce the marital conflict resulting from the intervention of the husband’s family of origin in their son’s marital life. Another long-term goal is that

the husband's family of origin needs to know and accept their boundaries in intervening in their son's marital life and they need to know that their intervention could be very destructive. (Dattilio & Jongsma, 2000) The writer believes that it is the husband's role to put a limitation on the intervention of his family of origin in his marital life. The third long-term goal is that the husband needs to help his family of origin, especially his mother, to understand that now he has his own family, and that he is not anymore that child who has to obey his parents in whatever they say. However, he still continues to respect them and to care for them.

Short-Term Goals. Through cognitive behavioral therapy the counselor can help couples under conflict due to in law intervention to reach certain short term objectives. These objectives entail (a) helping the couple to have better communication skills, (b) helping the wife to change her core beliefs that have affected her emotional responses negatively and to discover alternative balanced thoughts that lead to alternative emotional responses, and (c) helping the husband to know that his wife is the most important person in his life and that she needs his support.

Some Typical Automatic Thoughts amongst Couples who are in Conflict

In order to help couples to recognize some of their automatic thoughts that may add to their distress, the writer will list some of the typical automatic thoughts amongst couples who are in conflict. The American Institute for Cognitive Therapy (2003) listed these automatic thoughts.

Mind reading. This is when one of the partners interprets his/her spouse's motives as self-centered or hostile without enough evidences.

Fortune telling. This is when one of the partners or both of them predict that their marital life will not be better.

Labeling. This is when one of the partner's gives a negative character to his/her partner and believes that he/she will never change.

Shoulds. This is when one of the partners or both of them set a 'commandments' list about their relationship. They believe that the cause of their conflicts is due to not living up to their shoulds and they blame themselves or each other for that.

Perfectionism. This is when one of the partners or both of them set an idealistic high standard for their marital relationship and evaluate their relationship standard according to it.

Negative filter. This is when the couple does not remember or is not aware of the positives in their relationship, but they concentrate on their little negative experiences.

Discounting the positive. This is when the couple is aware of the positives that exist in their relationship, but they disregard them.

All or nothing thinking. This is when a partner describes his/her interaction with the other partner as being altogether good or bad without looking at any possibility for positive experiences.

Catastrophic thinking. This is when one of the partners or both of them deal with their conflict as the end of the world or that their marriage is terrible.

Emotional reasoning. This is when a partner feels depressed and anxious and assumes that his/her marriage is breaking down.

Externalization of responsibility. This is when one of the partners or both of them believe that their marital problems are out of their control.

Personalizing. This is when a partner blames his/her self as being the cause of his/her marital relationship problems.

Each time a partner experiences a negative automatic thought about his/her partner, he/she tries to regard it as one of the previous mentioned cognitive distortions. Then, couples can work on re-assessing the structure of their thoughts. (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990)

Techniques

There are some techniques that couples need to learn in order to change their automatic thoughts. Some of these techniques and procedures are mentioned in Dattilio & Padesky (1990) and in Beck (1988).

Teaching couples to recognize their automatic thoughts and labeling them. The purpose of this technique is to help couples to discover that insufficient information, incorrect information or distorted belief could be the reason of having their distorted thoughts. These cognitions can activate couples' emotional reactions as well as their behavioral actions that lead to marital conflicts. (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990)

Techniques for dismissing and testing the automatic thoughts. The therapist assists couples to assess their automatic thoughts and then to start thinking of new thoughts. When couples discover that insufficient evidence supports their automatic thoughts, then they will be able to think of different explanations. Couples need to evaluate their alternative beliefs to make their new beliefs as a part of their thinking. In order to do that, therapists help couples to find reliable evidence to support the alteration of their incorrect beliefs. When the evidence that couples have gathered appear to be insufficient, then they can formulate a hypothesis, which is to consider what might

happen in any given condition and to test the prediction. A different technique to aid couples in rearranging their thinking is to apply alternative explanations to their thoughts. As couples practice their distorted thoughts in their daily life, they need to relearn other ways of thinking founded on the newly collected data and they need to practice these new ways of thinking on a daily basis. This process helps couples to restructure their thoughts as well as to counter-balance their incorrect beliefs. (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990)

Teaching couples to identify the concept of negative framing in their marital relationship. This technique helps couples to recognize that the negative impressions that they may have toward each other as partners is the negative side of what they believed once to be their partner's positive characteristics. Couples can apply this technique by comparing and contrasting the initial redeeming qualities and the current irritating qualities of their partner. (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990)

Increasing positives in the relationship. Cognitive therapy stresses change in couples' behavior. It also stresses cognitive intervention. The therapist may give behavioral homework to couples at any time in their treatment process in order to help couples to check their beliefs' validity, to improve their relationship's quality and to gain practice in new skills. (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990)

Imagery and role play techniques. Therapists may use imagery and role play techniques with couples in conflict especially in emotionally charged conditions. The aim of using imagery and role play techniques is to help couples in conflict to remember their happy times together. Therapists usually utilize these techniques during the early stages of counseling. The usage of imagery techniques must be with caution, because therapists can not use it with all individuals, and its usage could backfire. Furthermore,

therapists can utilize role play techniques especially if there is a lack of communication between the couple during counseling sessions. (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990)

Communication skills. Although they are using the same words, couples sometimes appear as if they are speaking two different languages. The message that one partner gives to his/her partner is completely different from the message that his/her partner receives. (Beck, 1988) Generally, couples have problems in communication when they have anger, depression or anxiety. Therapists can help couples to have good communication skills, by teaching them some skills in talking and listening. These skills are essential to help the couples who have communication problems to build good communication. (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990) It is also very important to help partners in conflict to classify their level of anger and control. A good technique to help couples to do that is the usage of the 'color zone' technique as explained by Beck (1988). There are three zones of anger by which the therapist can classify a couple's level of anger and control. These three zones are: (a) the yellow (warm) zone. In this zone a partner feels anger towards his/her mate, but he/she is able to control his/her thoughts and actions. (b) The red (hot) zone. In this zone, partners have a less control over their thinking and actions. Their thoughts are illogical and they confuse the events of the past with those of the present. Furthermore, partners in the red zone do not accept corrective information that disagrees with their beliefs. The angry words that partners use in this zone are words of swearing, threats of violence, and there could be a plan to break up their marriage. (c) The blue (temperate) zone. In this zone, partners' ability for communication is good. A partner is able to hear his/her mate's criticisms and is able to recognize when these

criticisms are valid and react calmly with these criticisms as well as to express his/her own complaints.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The writer will tackle in this chapter the biblical and theological foundations of marriage and family that a therapist may use in an integrative way with CBT. Using these foundations enables him to help any Christian Jordanian couple who is in conflict because of the intervention of the husband's family of origin- especially the husband's mother - in their marital life.

The bible supports the same kind of self-consciousness of cognitions that the cognitive behavioral therapy supports. The bible encourages a person to give up his unrighteous thoughts (Is. 55:7) and to renew his mind (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4: 22-25) by changing unrighteous thoughts to righteous ones. (Jones & Butman, 1991, 212)

In Rom. 12:1-2 (NKJV), Paul wrote to the Romans by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

When Christians think of what the Lord did for them on the cross and when they consider His sacrificial love towards them, they discover that they have to give all their lives to their redeemer who died for their sins on the cross. Therefore, they offer their bodies as a living sacrifice to Him. That is to say, believers have to renew their minds to live a life that is compatible with what the Lord wants and not with the world's standards. (Bruce, 1985)

Human beings have done nothing to save themselves, but it was Jesus who has done all the work for them. All that human beings need to do is to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior to gain salvation. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Eph. 2 8-9, NKJV)

In Rom. 12:2, Paul declares that human beings are not what they were before conversion, but their acts are now according to new values, rules and aims that they purpose for their lives. The governing part of the human being is his/her mind. Therefore, renewing the mind leads to renewing the human being as a whole. Human beings keep on renewing their lives by the progress of sanctification in their lives; that is, they die to sin over and over again, day by day, and they live for righteousness over and over again, day by day, until they reach perfection in glory. (Henry, 1991) Therefore, God’s children are taking part in His work in them in the process of their transformation to be like His Son’s image (Rom. 8:29). Paul is talking about the life of faith that requires the obedience of the Christian to God, as Paul wrote in Romans 1:5 “Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name” (NKJV). Accordingly, the life of a Christian as God’s child will be a life of worship in every moment. Thus, although the Christian lives in this world, he lives his life according to the Kingdom of God to which he belongs, as Jesus prayed for His disciples in Jn. 17:15-16 “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”(NKJV) (Carson, France, Motyer, & Wenham, 1953/1994) Christians do not reveal the character of this world, but they reveal that of Jesus (Jn. 15:1-17). Their

separation from the world is in their values and it is not a physical or geographical separation. (Keener, 2003) In short, by renewing their minds Christians can figure out God's will in their lives, because God has given them the Holy Spirit who works within them, changing their hearts and minds in order to obey Him (Carson, France, Motyer, & Wenham, 1953/1994).

What motivates Christians is more than the narrow happiness that they can have by fulfilling their own desires. In 1 Sam. 15:22, Samuel states that if people disobey the Lord, then their disobedience is as bad as offering sacrifices to the Lord without their obedience. God wants human beings to obey Him. He does not want people only to attend church and sing hymns, thinking that by keeping on doing such acts they will gain forgiveness. (Carson, France, Motyer, & Wenham, 1953/1994)

The Lord desires goodness from human beings. He wants human beings to manifest the presence of Christ in their lives through their words and acts; and hence, bring glory to God the Father. The Westminster confession of faith replies to the question about man's chief end, by stating that it is to forever glorify and enjoy God (Jones & Butman, 1991).

If people look at the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, they surely find that God's purpose is that humans glorify Him. What is the relation, however, between God's glorification and their happiness?

The Bible is full of promises for the believers, some of which are:

1. Ps. 84:11, 12 "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who

walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!” (NKJV)

2. Jas. 1:25 “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” (NKJV)
3. Prov. 12:28 “In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.” (NKJV)
4. Prov. 21:21 “He who follows righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness and honor.” (NKJV)

These promises show that as people obey God they glorify Him. When they glorify God in their lives, then they are happy, because through God’s presence in their life they gain blessings, happiness and eternal life. Therefore, it is valuable to know the Lord’s will for marriage and to know how to apply it in order to have a happy marital life.

The writer will tackle below the biblical bases that couples who are in conflict because of the intervention of the husband’s family of origin need to know in order to live the better life that Jesus spoke of in Jn. 10:10 “...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (NKJV)

Covenant: Definition, History and Relation to Marriage

A covenant is a commitment to a special kind of relationship that does not normally exist, but that becomes sacred through swearing in solemn ceremonies. (LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 1992, 115)

Covenant in Ancient Times

Covenants were highly significant in ancient social and political life as instruments for initiating relationships among different nations. (Freedman, 1992, 1180) Thus, the rulers of various nations used to make covenants with other nations in order to reach an agreement that would be of benefit to them. In addition, these covenants played the role of instruments that enhanced the relationships between various nations. Moreover, people used to look at these agreements as traditional customs that successfully encouraged cooperation, as well as cohesion, between the various members of the nation. (Myers, 1989, 240)

In ancient times, people used to make a covenant in front of a deity and if any one of the parties broke the covenant, then his/her penalty would be death (Janssen, 2001).

Covenant in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, we find that God made covenants with Israel. According to the Old Testament, the word ‘covenant’ is a kind of promise based on a treaty between God and the Israelite people, through which the Israelites can be confident about the continuity of God’s friendship and protection. (McCarthy, 1972, 2) Such an agreement between the Israelites and the Lord has been the outcome of God’s love for His people. Ex. 4:5, Is. 1:2 and Hos. 11:1 clearly depict this love using the relationship between the father and his children whereas Jer. 2:2 and Hos. 2:19- 20 portray this love through the relationship between the husband and his wife. (Szikszai, n.d., 23) The covenant’s idea is essential and basic to God-human relationships, especially the redemptive relationship. We discover from this idea of covenant everything that is related to the religious beliefs and faith of Israel. (Baab, 1931, 136)

Knight (1959) mentioned that the relationship between the Israelites and God can be expressed by the word *hesedh*. Knight discusses the marriage relationship in ancient Eastern marriages which was in some way an ‘imposed’ marriage where the bride did not have a choice, but said yes willingly to the man who promised to love her and to give her status and home. Likewise, God is loyal to Israel and “this ‘reliability’ and this ‘trustworthiness’ of God was thus an aspect of the *hesedh* He ever showed toward Israel” (pp. 224, 225).

In His covenant relationship with His people, the Lord announced the enlarging of His grace to His people: whereas His people’s part was an obligation of personal commitment to Him as it appears in Jer. 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 32:38; Ezek. 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:23; Zech. 8:8 “they shall be My people, and I will be their God”. However, the people did not succeed in recognizing Him as their Savior who had a personal relationship with them. Unlike the covenant of Sinai that was written on a stone (Ex. 31:18; 34:28, 29; Deut. 4:13; 5:22), the Lord wants to write His law in His people’s hearts. In Jer. 31:33 (NKJV), it is written:

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

He wants His relationship with His people to be a ‘covenant-love’ relationship (*hesedh*). Therefore, He wants His people to enter into a ‘new covenant’ with Him. (Elwell, 1991; Kuist, 1960/1961) Although the Israelites were frequently unfaithful to God, His love to them was an everlasting love “...I have loved you with an everlasting love...” (Jer. 31:3, NKJV). This reflects the kind of bond that the Lord planned for marriage. (MacArthur, 1986, 302)

In order to understand the importance of covenant in the relationship between God and human beings, it is worth knowing that there are two important features in covenant. The two features are promise and expectation. These two features appear clearly in the Davidic covenant where there is a promise for an eternal throne for the expected Messiah, David's son. Hence, the covenant is the most significant link between the Old Testament and the New Testament. (McCarthy, 1972)

Covenant in the New Testament

In Jesus Christ, the Lord wants to enter into a covenant with all people. In His Son, God has established a new covenant with human beings. This covenant is an everlasting one. It is the covenant of God's grace towards humanity. (McCarthy, 1972)

In the end, it is noteworthy that the usage of covenants in the bible as well as the ancient Near East was for relationships where obligations included issues of the heart besides outward acts. Therefore, if any of the parties in covenant did not keep his/her promises, none of them could go to a human court for judgment, because no one could decide if any one of them was innocent or guilty, but only the Lord could decide that. (Hugenberger, 2004) Consequently, the definition of biblical covenant according to Evans (1995) is "a divinely ordained contract that is predicated on relationship." (p. 10).

Marriage is a Covenant

In the Jordanian culture, many people think that covenant in marriage equals a contract. Nonetheless, there is a big difference between contract and covenant. A contract between two individuals implies obligations that define their relationship. Accordingly, they think of their relationship in linear terms. On the other hand, a covenant is a triangular relationship and not a linear one, because it adds the Lord as the

third party and the witness of the agreement between two individuals. (Hugenberger, 2004)

The bible explains the relationship between the Lord and His people as a covenantal relationship where God Himself is the partner and the witness. In the marriage covenant, God is the witness who holds the accountability of marital couple to their vows. (Hugenberger, 2004) Marriage is a covenant that the Lord has established. Therefore, no one can end a marriage except the Lord Himself. For that reason, Jesus said "...they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."(Mt. 19:6, NKJV). (Evans, 1995)

When God created Adam, Adam did not recognize his need for Eve. God Himself had in His mind Adam's need for Eve and He is the one who established the rules and the end purpose for marriage. (Prince, 2000) In marriage, the Lord joins the man and his spouse in front of witnesses, and they enter into a covenant (Augsburger, 1971, pp. 15, 16). The covenant context is clear in Gen. 2:24 where we find the words 'leaves' and 'cleaves'. These words reflect a covenant context. (Hugenberger, 1994) Man needs to leave his parental background and to make a new beginning in his life in order to attain a true unity with his wife. This unity is the purpose of the Lord for marriage. (Prince, 2000) Although the husband and the wife keep their individual personalities, they become one after marriage and this is a mystery (Janssen, 2001)

In Gen. 4:1, the word of God says "Now Adam knew Eve his wife..." (NKJV). The word 'know' which is *yada* in the original context of the book of Genesis reflects a total sharing between Adam and Eve. Therefore, it reflects the sharing of their bodies as

well as the sharing of their souls as Steve Tracy, the professor of theology and ethics at Phoenix Seminary, has clarified. (Tracy, 2000)

Hugenberger (1994) shows that there is an oath/oath sign in biblical marriage. The oath sign is the sexual union that shows marriage's consummation. Also, Janssen (2001) clarifies that at the minute of intercourse between the married couple, they directly become one flesh and a new creation comes out as a fruit of their marriage. The children reflect their parents' image exactly as the children of God reflect His image in their lives. With time, husband and wife in a healthy marriage start to think like each other and their relationship together as husband and wife becomes stronger than the individuality of each one of them. Therefore, their oneness in the marital relationship reveals the unity of God within the trinity.

Examination of the texts of Prov. 2:16-17 and Mal. 2:14 will show that marriage is a covenant between the husband and his wife. In Proverbs 2:16-17, it can be seen that the unfaithfulness of a woman to her husband is a breaking of the covenant that she has made with him before the Lord. It is a metaphor of her unfaithfulness to the Lord. These verses focus on the 'strange' women whose loyalties are to foreign gods. (Carson, 1994) Furthermore, in Mal. 2:14, the Lord speaks to the men who act in an unfaithful way towards their wives. God is telling these men that He will not listen to their prayers if they do not keep their covenant commitments to their wives. (Janssen, 2001) Divorce and mixed marriage had been widespread in Israel at Malachi's time, but the Lord was not happy with what was going on. Despite the fact that there is no mention of the word 'covenant' itself in Mal. 2:14, Hugenberger says that the word 'covenant' refers to literal marriage (a covenant between a husband and his wife). Malachi condemns divorce that

is based on aversion. Consequently, this clarifies that literal marriage in Mal. 2:14 is a covenant. (Hugenberger, 1994)

Moreover, it is worth looking at other Old Testament texts such as Prov. 5:15-23, Job. 31:1, Hos. 4:14. Taking into consideration that marriage is a covenant; these verses show that sexual fidelity is a moral obligation not only for the wife, but also for the husband. (Hugenberger, 1994)

In summary, marriage is a covenant. Augsburger (1971) clarifies the Christian perspective of marriage in the following way:

The Christian understands marriage as a covenant made under God and in the presence of fellow members of the Christian family. Such a pledge endures, not because of the force of law or the fear of its sanctions, but because an unconditional covenant has been made. A covenant more solemn, more binding, more permanent than any legal contract. (p. 15)

The Responsibilities and the Roles of the Husband and the Wife

In Gen. 2:15-17(NKJV), it is written that:

...the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die".

The examination of chapters two and three of Genesis indicates that even though Eve was the first one who sinned, it was Adam who allowed sin to find its way into the world, because Adam was the one who had the headship position. (MacDonald, 1995, 35)

Thus, Adam's sin was not only his disobedience to the Lord's command, but also his surrender to the leadership of Eve by not applying the authority that God gave to him.

On the other hand, Eve's sin was not only her disobedience to the Lord's particular

command, but also her acting in an independent way without consulting Adam about the temptation of the serpent. (MacArthur, 1986, 293)

When the Lord created Eve, Adam directly identified her as his ideal companion and he expressed that himself when he said “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Gen. 2:23) Adam lived in a wonderful harmony with Eve, and they experienced a perfect marriage in which they were satisfied. Adam did not find anything to criticize in Eve. Conversely, after the fall human beings misinterpret the proper authority of the husband, and they also misinterpret the proper submission of the wife. Accordingly, the battle of the sexes started. The chauvinism of males as well as the liberation of females became visible. This is part of the Lord’s curse on humanity because of the fall. On the other hand, the Lord’s basic plan for the husband’s authority over his wife as well as for wife’s submission to her husband was never changed. It was the same before the fall, during the fall and after the fall. After the fall, authority and submission in the relationship between husbands and wives can be restored by the grace that they receive by Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross and by the filling of the Holy Spirit in their lives. (MacArthur, 1986)

Christians as well as non-Christians are enormously connecting between authority and the headship of males in marriage till our current time. On the other hand, Christians nowadays are stressing on husband’s mutual submission and his servanthood role towards his wife. Therefore, as Christians, we need to understand what is meant by the husband’s headship and the mutual submission in the bible. Being the head of the house, the husband has to follow the example of Christ, who gave His life to His body (the church). Additionally, the examination of Eph. 5 shows that the dominant message in

this chapter is mutual submissiveness. (Balswick & Balswick, 1989/1999) Mutual submissiveness in Eph. 5:21 “submitting to one another in the fear of God” (NKJV) is a submission out of a reverential respect, because Paul used the word ‘fear’ in the context of the love of Christ. (Hoehner, 2002, 719)

Today, there is a contemporary resistance of traditional marriage. Therefore, many people in the world started to concentrate on the individuality of the person in marriage and consequently to call for weakening the husband’s authority. Accordingly, democracy is the base of modern marriage that concentrates on the freedom that each spouse has and his/her right for self-fulfillment. For these reasons, authority is for the spouse who can offer more things that the other spouse values like sex, money, security...etc. In other words, modern marriage is characterized by self-centeredness instead of self-giving. (Balswick & Balswick, 1989/1999)

In spite of the fact that as believers we are all one in Christ, this does not eliminate our relationships together on earth, and we need to respect the authority and government systems that the Lord has established. Each society needs to have a system so as to be ordered well. That is, each society needs to have two sustaining pillars (authority and submission). In 1 Cor. 11:3, Paul mentioned that this principle appears in Godhead “...the head of Christ is God.” (NKJV) The Lord established this principle for the home and He gave the headship position to the husband and the place of submission to the wife. (MacDonald, 1995, 1947) If the relationship of the husband and wife is according to the Lord’s will, then they will have the most meaningful relationship possible in this life, as Peter called the marital relationship “the grace of life” (1Pet. 3:7) (MacArthur, 1986, 291).

The writer will clarify the responsibilities of the husband and the wife mainly by studying Eph. 5:22-33. The responsibility of the husband is to love his wife sacrificially; as Christ loves the church, causing the wife's submission to her husband's divine authority, so the church submits to the Savior. (Christenson, 1970) When the wife submits to her husband, she submits to his leadership and trusts the Lord to lead him and to bless their life together.

The Love of the Husband

In Eph. 5:25-32, Paul defines the measure of the husband's love to his wife. In these verses, Paul has mentioned the term "to love" six times. This term indicates love regardless of merit, even to the unworthy. Therefore, the husband's love towards his wife is an unconditional love; it does not depend on his view of her. The husband is to love his own wife even though he may see her unlovable or as not deserving his love. (Hoehner, 2002)

In order to clarify the meaning of the word 'love', which Paul used in Eph.5, the writer of this thesis project will tackle the three different and dissimilar words for love in the Greek language. These words are: *Eros*, *Phileo* and *Agape*. *Eros* signifies love in its meaning of feeling, passion and desire. There is no appearance of this word in the New Testament. *Phileo* implies love in its meaning of concern, regard, respect and the human feeling of affection. We find this word used sparingly in the New Testament. *Agape* means sacrificial love. This word describes God's love. It appears often in the New Testament. *Agape* is the word for love that Paul used in Eph. 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives" (NKJV). (Christenson, 1970, 126, 127) This verse goes together with Paul's clarification of mutual submission that he has indicated in Eph. 5:21. The main

submission of the husband to his wife is through loving her. The measure of the husband's love to his wife is Christ's love to the church. This type of love is an everlasting love. The husband as a human being can love his wife with the same kind of sacrificial love that Christ has for the church because as a Christian man he has the nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit dwells within him. In short, the pattern that the husband needs to follow in loving his wife is the same pattern of Christ's love to the church and that is a sacrificial love. It is not wrong if the husband finds appealing characteristics in his own wife, but even if the husband does not any more find the attractive characteristics in his wife that he used to think were present in her, he needs to know that the Lord is commanding him to love his own wife indissolubly and that this is the Lord's will for him. (MacArthur, 1986)

In Eph. 5:28 "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself." (NKJV), Paul is broadening the example that he gave to the husbands about Christ's love (Eph. 5:25-27) to relate the husbands love for their own wives to their love for their own bodies. The word body in this verse means the physical body. (Hoehner, 2002, 764) On the other hand, the word 'own' refers to monogamy which reflects the Lord's will for his people's marital relationships (MacDonald, 1995, 1948, 1949).

In Eph. 5:31 Paul quotes directly from Gen. 2:24 and wrote "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." (NKJV) Paul presents the original plan of God for the marital relationship. After marriage, the husband shifts the loyalty that he had to his parents to his own wife with whom he has a real union as they have become one flesh. (MacDonald, 1995, 1949)

One of the major barriers to having a successful marital life for Jordanian Christian couples is the husband's failure in 'leaving his father and mother and cleaving to his wife' and consequently in not giving his loyalty to her.

The Submission of the Wife

Paul wrote to all wives who are believers: "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord." (Eph. 5:22, NKJV) The submission of the wives to their husbands is a willing submission. It is a voluntary submission of the wife to her own husband's ordained authority. It is very important to clarify here that there is no command for the wife to obey her husband. Therefore husbands can never deal with their wives as their servants neither for them nor for their families of origin. Instead, the wife is an equal to the husband. (MacArthur, 1986) The Lord created man and woman in His own image "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Gen. 1:27, NKJV) Furthermore, the Lord gave the husband the responsibility to provide, love, serve and protect his wife. Thus, the husband's authority is to be exercised out of his love towards his wife and not in any way in the form of commands or orders to do his wishes and desires. In other words, neither is the husband superior to his wife, nor the wife is inferior to her husband. (MacArthur, 1986, 280, 281)

The Role of the Husband

Peter clarifies two main roles that husbands need to fulfill towards their wives: "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." (1Pet. 3:7, NKJV). These two roles are:

First, Peter teaches the husband to ‘dwell with’ his wife ‘with understanding’.

The term to ‘dwell with’ appears only in this verse in the New Testament. It appeared in the Greek Old Testament and frequently with sexual implications like Deut. 22:13; 24:1. This term covers the marriage relationship as a whole. And the meaning of ‘with understanding’ is the way that the husband uses to show his love and care for his wife. That is to say, a husband is to treat his wife in a selfless way, with sensitivity, and he is to show her his love and care whether in the bedroom or in any other activity of their marital life. (Davids, 1990, 122, 123; MacArthur, 1986, 304)

Second, Peter teaches the husband to show honor to his wife (the weaker vessel). Specifically, he teaches the husband to act and to talk to her in a way that shows his honor and respect for her. It is essential that the husband deals considerately with his wife, not only to please her, but also to please God. It is important to understand the term ‘weaker vessel’ in the verse, which means that the female is weaker physically than the male. This term, however, does not reflect any weakness in the female mind or morality. (Davids, 1990, 122, 123; MacArthur, 1986, 304) Prince (2000) says that every man should tell himself “My wife is special. There is no one else like her”. (p. 31) In other words, every husband is to support and value his own wife, because there is no other woman in this world like her. Prince adds that the least that a husband can do for his own wife is to give her praise as it is written in Prov. 31:29 about the virtuous wife “Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her” (NKJV). (Prince, 2000)

The Role of the Wife

In Gen. 2:18, “the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”” The wife is a helper to her husband. Prince (2000) translates this verse as “I will make him a helper to complete him” (p. 34). The idea of being man’s helper does not mean that the woman is inferior to man, but that the Lord God has given her this specific function. Jesus told His disciples that after He leaves them, He will send them another ‘helper’. “And I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth...” (Jn. 14:16, 17). The usage of the word helper in verse 16 never means the inferiority of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. Therefore, being her husband’s helper, never means that the wife is inferior to her husband, but it is her God-given role. By being her husband’s helper, the wife is the one who encourages her husband. She is the one who supports and upholds him (Prince, 2000). The Lord has created for Adam a “helper matching him” (Carson, 1994, 62). Mufid (1999) describes the role of the wife as a helper by mentioning the sorts of help that she provides for her husband; the wife helps her husband in physical work, in thinking and taking the right decisions and in all the aspects of life that she can.

Honoring Parents and the Relationship between the Married Son and His Mother

It is worth taking a quick look at the role of the mother in Old Testament times in order to understand the relationship between the mother and her son. The main role of the mother at Old Testament times was childbearing. The Israelites used to honor in a special way the mothers of sons. Although the Israelite society was a patriarchal society, where fathers had a supreme authority over their families, the Israelite society gave

mothers a notable respect and the disrespect of mothers was forbidden (Ex. 20:12, Prov. 1: 8; 6:20; 10:1; 15:20, Ezek. 22:7). There were many roles that the mother in Old Testament times used to fulfill. These roles were obtaining water from the community well, making bread for the family, buying food, cooking, sewing, raising her children in faith and humility and taking the responsibility of training her children and instructing them in the absence of the father. From the book of Proverbs, we can figure out that the mother is an essential character in the ability of the family to blossom. In biblical times both parents had an important role in keeping the unity of the family and maintaining its safety. On the other hand, the role of the children was to obey and respect their parents. (Jones, 1988) The role of the mother toward her children is almost the same in our days except that many mothers are working outside home instead of obtaining the water and making the bread, and buying ready-made clothes instead of sewing.

In order to understand the form of the relationship that the Lord requires from a married son toward his mother, it is very important to study the fifth commandment “Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.” (Deut. 5:16, NKJV). The fifth commandment is the first commandment with a promise (Eph. 6:2) (MacDonald, 1995, 109).

There is a close parallelism between Deut. 5:16 and Deut. 4:40 (NKJV):

You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time.

This parallelism shows that covenant's continuity is the main issue that is involved in these verses. The responsibility of the parents is to teach their children about the covenant relationship between the Lord and Israel (Deut. 4:9-10, 40), whereas the responsibility of the children is to learn about this covenant relationship as well as to honor their parents. This relationship between the parents and their children afford a solid structure for families. (Craigie, 1976, 158, 159) The first four commandments state the relationship between the Israelites and Yahweh, whereas the last six commandments present a guide for the Israelites' life within the covenant community. In the fifth commandment the Lord established the model for the children's relationship with their parents. Parents are considered to be the Lord's channel through which children received the gift of life. The relationship between the children and their parents is the most important one and the disrespect of parents is a disobedience to Yahweh. (Durham, 1987) Lutzer (2003) expressed the hurtfulness of neglecting one's parents by writing:

I can think of nothing more hurtful than being rejected by the very ones you bore into the world, the children you nurtured, for whom you sacrificed. And now suddenly because you're a burden, and because you cause such inconvenience to their schedules, you are put away somewhere with very little love and communication. This is not what God had in mind! (p. 20)

From all the above it is very important to notice that in order to fulfill God's fifth commandment, every person has to honor and to respect his/her parents all through his/her life. But it is also noteworthy that after marriage man needs to downgrade his previous greatest loyalty to his father and mother and to give the first place to his wife. Therefore, the husband leaves his family of origin and cleaves to his wife with whom he has become one body (Gen. 2:24). The word cleave reflects the covenant context. (Hugenberger, 2004) Downgrading the husband's loyalty to his parents and giving the

first place to his wife is not contradicting his honor and respect to his parents in any way.

All the internal relationships of the home are in the context of covenant.

Honoring In Laws and the Relationship between the Daughter in Law and Her Mother in

Law

What is applied to the relationship between the children and their parents can be applied to the relationship between married couples and their in laws; that is, to honor and respect their in laws. When our in laws give us advice, we need to study their advice to see if it is good and many times it is very good advice, because they care about us and about our future life exactly as our parents do. A good example of that is the advice that Jethro gave to Moses (Ex. 18:13- 24). Therefore, what is important is our view of our in laws' advice. If we have negative attitudes towards our in laws' advice, then we need to change our thinking and evaluate their advice and accept the advice that is good for us.

In the book of Ruth, when Naomi learned that there was a lot of food in Judah, she decided to leave Moab and move back to Judah. Orpah and Ruth, Naomi's two daughters in law, started to move with her. But Naomi advised her two daughters in law to return back to Moab. She told them that she could not present to them new husbands because she had no more sons. Orpah thought of Naomi's words and she returned back to Moab. She chose the easiest course. On the other hand, Ruth cleaved to her mother in law, even though she knew that it would be hard work because they were two females with no male provider. Ruth showed a total commitment to her mother in law. She chose Naomi's God as well as Naomi's people to be hers. (MacDonald, 1995) Ruth's care for Naomi was very obvious in Ruth 1:19- 2:23. The book of Ruth describes a special mother in law-daughter in law relationship.

The faith of Ruth shone out with brightness when the people of Israel were walking away from God. Boaz bought back the land that belonged to Elimelech and married Ruth. Boaz and Ruth had a son whose name was Obed and he became Jesse's ancestor (Jesse was David's father). Boaz was a real 'redeemer' relative. Ruth is a picture of the church, the bride of Jesus, that He redeemed by His precious blood.

(MacDonald, 1995)

In laws deserve all respect and honor exactly as parents do. Couples need to thank them for bringing their mates into the world as well as for providing their mates for them. Couples need to demonstrate their love toward their in laws and to build a positive relationship with them. (Wright & Roberts, 1997) At the same time, couples need to remember that they should not let their parents or their in laws intervene in their marital relationship.

Communication, Anger Management, Forgiveness and Conflict Resolution

Communication

Many times it is very easy to be in a hurry to talk and to be slow to listen to each other. Also, many people are swift to anger. This is exactly the contrast of what the Lord requires from us to do in our communication with each other. Furthermore, many times people feel sorry about a word that they had said which hurt another person, but they can never take back the word once spoken. Communication skills are very important among people and they have a special importance among marital couples. (Wilkinson, 2005)

Conversation between marital couples is very essential and it helps the wife to feel bonded and close to her husband. The kind of conversation that satisfies the woman is that which concentrates on the events that took place in her day, the people she met and

the feelings she has about them. In the female psyche, conversation helps females to feel united to others. Therefore, if the husband's work requires travel or being away from home, it takes the wife one or two days to adjust and to feel close to her husband when he returns back. Conversation between marital couples is important to create the warm atmosphere that both of them need as well as to be able to make their physical relationship deep. In addition to meeting the emotional needs of the woman, conversation between married couples helps husband and wife to know each others' needs and to learn how to fulfill these needs. (Harley, 2001)

Communication helps married couples to be close to each other, to enjoy the presence of each other and to have a productive and satisfying relationship with each other. If married couples fail to communicate, they will feel isolated from each other. Some people can communicate better than others, but communication is an art that every person can learn. Many times husbands are not willing to expose their feelings toward their wives, and this unwillingness makes many wives feel frustrated. (Dobson, 2005)

Dobson (2005) points out a note that he received from a woman about her husband's daily routine "[My husband] arrives home, reads the newspaper, eats dinner, talks on the phone, watches TV, takes a shower, and goes to bed" (p. 66).

Many times, husbands find it very difficult to hear their wives' messages regarding a particular time for communication. Furthermore, many times women become their husbands' 'sexual dream machines', whereas husbands do not work on meeting their wives emotional needs. In order to have a successful marriage husbands and wives must have time for meaningful conversation between them. It is the responsibility of the man to express his deep feelings towards his wife and to bring happiness to her "When a

man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken.”

(Deut. 24:5, NKJV) (Dobson, 2005)

To know that the Lord is accepting and loving us as we are is the heart of our experience as Christians. Accordingly, we can feel that we are valuable people.

Additionally, if we feel that our mates know us and love us very well, then we may assume that we have reached the maximum happiness. If a couple are open to each other, then intimacy takes place. Therefore, to have intimacy in their relationships, partners need to lower their defenses toward each other as well as to share their thoughts, feelings, wishes and needs with each other. If partners have trust in their relationship, then they can share their deepest awareness with each other without any fear of exposing their personal awareness outside their marital relationship. This climate of trust among partners is a suitable climate for intimacy to grow. Communication among couples is very important. Through their communication with each other, partners can exchange ideas, make their decisions together and feel the understanding and the appreciation of each other. (Dyer & Dyer, 1988)

Communication in marital relationships is like the blood to the body; without communication there is no marital relationship. Through communication, partners can share themselves with each other in a verbal and non verbal ways. (Wright, 1985)

Priolo (1999) illustrates that there is a connection between what is there in our hearts and what we share with each other (Ps. 12:2; 19:14; Prov. 26:23- 25; Mt. 15:8). Jesus said “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil

treasure brings forth evil things.” (Mt. 12:34b- 35, NKJV). Therefore, we learn as Christians that we can not say good things if there is evil in our hearts.

In addition to that, Priolo (1999) clarifies that words are important in communication (Prov. 16:24), but it is not enough because non verbal communication (Acts. 12:17) and the tone of voice (Prov. 16:21) are also important in our communication with each other. On the other hand, there is a special emphasis on verbal communication in the bible more than the non verbal one and the tone of voice. Jesus said that our words, as believers, either justify us or condemn us on the judgment’s day (Mt. 12:36-37). Also, people judge us by what we say. Our words may harm others or heal them (Prov. 12:18). Moreover, our words may build others up or tear them down (Eph. 4:29). Additionally, our words could be either a source of encouragement or a source of discouragement to others (1Thess. 4:18; 5:11; Heb. 3:13).

In spite of the fact that our words are more emphasized in the bible than our tone of voice and our body language, still our tone of voice as well as our non verbal communication plays a vital role in our communication with each other. By the usage of an appropriate tone of voice we can communicate our righteous attitude with others (Prov. 15:1), whereas by using an improper tone of voice, we may communicate bad attitudes with others. Furthermore, using body language plays a vital role in our communication with each other. Communication via body language may include one or more of the following: keeping an eye contact with others, facial expressions, outward behaviors or attitudes, the usage of gestures. (Priolo, 1999)

Anger Management and Forgiveness

Dealing with anger and forgiving each other is at the heart of preserving good communication between partners. James talks to the believers about the importance of receiving the word of God with submission. In Jas. 1:19, 20, he says by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (NKJV) Christians have experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in transforming their lives and in becoming new creatures. Christians submit to the word of God, through which the Lord carries on His divine work in and through their lives. Therefore, the Christian who is willing to be submissive to the word of God needs to “be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jas. 1:19, NKJV). In other words, he/she needs to listen carefully and to receive the right message from the speaker, to concentrate on the content of the message that the other person is sharing and not to be immersed in his/her own thoughts. Furthermore, he/she needs to work together with others in love as a Christian and not to enforce his/her personal way on others. (MacArthur, 1998)

Anger management. There are many reasons for anger between married couples. Some of these reasons are: (a) labeling the other partner, (b) feeling that there are things that threaten a partner’s self-esteem, (c) reading the other partner’s mind and (d) making unsuitable statements like ‘you should/should not’ to the other partner. (Wright, 1985)

In Eph. 4:26, Paul declares that there is a room for righteous anger as Jesus’ anger in Mark 3:5. But, people have to control this kind of anger, not to let it grow into sin. Also, they should never justify their anger. Furthermore, people should not carry their

anger over from day to day in order not to have a deep 'root' in their hearts and then give the devil a space to act. (Vaughan, 1977)

Partners need to know that they have three ways to deal with anger. These three ways are:

1. They change the direction of anger from out side to inside and this may cause ulcerative colitis, high blood pressure, depression and/or stress.
2. They ventilate anger. This choice makes the partner who vents his/her anger to feel better, but it hurts the other partner.
3. They stop giving way to anger by changing the negative thoughts and behaving in a positive way. The third choice is the best one, because we learn from the word of God that as Christians we have to say the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). That is to say, married couples can say the truth in a way that makes them more cemented with each other than they were before. (Wright, 1985)

From a practical viewpoint, counselors can help couples to deal with their anger by (a) identifying the cause of their anger, (b) evaluating its reasons, (c) responding to how their anger may help in building their relationship, and (d) discovering the fiery thoughts that cause their anger and exchange them for calm thoughts. Therefore, training couples to change their fiery thoughts into calm thoughts is an effective approach to help couples to deal with their anger and to live a better marital life. (Wright, 1985)

Forgiveness. Another important aspect in reaching a better marital life is forgiveness. Many times, it is the hardest matter for couples to do.

Forgiveness is not a choice for believers, but it is a condition in order to have a fellowship with the Lord (Mk. 11:25). They will spend their eternity in heaven, because their heavenly father forgave all their sins through the sacrificial work of Jesus. The condition for the Lord's forgiveness is human beings' repentance and faith. (Adams, 1994)

Paul wrote in Eph. 4:32 "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." (NKJV) Therefore, the Lord expects that believers will forgive each other as He forgave them (Mt. 18:21-35). Forgiveness is the oil that keeps marriages' machinery going on without a complete break down. The Lord announced that He will never remember the sins of believers again (Is. 43:25; Jer. 31:34) and that is a grant for His forgiveness. The Lord dealt with their sins once and for all and He called them to forgive one another. (Adams, 1994)

Many times when a partner seeks forgiveness, the other partner does not. Also, repeatedly when a partner faces the other one with his/her sin, he/she does not accept to confess it. Partners commit several offences against each other and the practical solution for that is (a) to forgive one another, (b) to remember that human beings are all sinners who are covered by the blood of Jesus and (c) to apply 1Pet. 4:8 "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."" (NKJV) (Adams, 1994)

When a partner forgives the other, he/she (a) needs not to think about the event that caused the offence, (b) not to mention the incident or use it against his/her partner, (c) not to tell others about that incident, and (d) not to give a way for that incident to be a hinder in the personal relationship of partners. (Sande & Raabe, 2002)

Conflict Resolution

There are conflicts in marriage, but couples need to know that being one in marriage does not mean being the same. Couples need to learn how to deal with these conflicts in a positive way. Therefore, couples need to learn how to understand their differences and how to show their love and respect for each other when arguing positively. Furthermore, they need to learn how to concentrate on their oneness instead of themselves as individuals. (Smalley, 2002)

Smalley (2002) gives main points that couples need to know in order to resolve their conflicts. Some of these points are:

1. To learn how to fight right in handling marital conflicts.
2. Never to belittle each other and not to think that the needs of one of them have the priority over the needs of the other. In other words, not to be selfish.
3. To be good listeners and to understand the issues that they discuss with each other well.
4. To honor and value one another. To know each other's needs and to commit themselves to fulfill them (Rom. 12:10).
5. To express their love to each other.

Many couples lose hope when they can not resolve their conflicts. But, they need to remember that through their prayers they can invite the Lord into their lives and that He is the only one who returns power and assurance in their marriages. Through their prayers, couples may remember that God is the one who joined them together and that

they have a relationship with Him. With God, couples can do things that they cannot do by themselves. (Temple, 2006)

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several sources were consulted and used as a background for writing this thesis-project. The literature used covers the most significant materials that pertain to using the cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) with couples. It also covers the main materials that include the biblical and theological bases for the topic of this thesis-project.

Furthermore, the writer used the materials that are related to his thesis-project from the sociological and cultural studies concerning marriage and family in the Jordanian society. However, these sociological and cultural studies are few. As a result, he had to rely also on some of the related articles from Jordanian daily newspapers. The scarcity of the material about Jordanian's perception of in laws' intervention made him prepare his own questionnaire to show that this intervention problem still exists in the Jordanian community till today.

In this thesis-project, the goal of the counselor is to help Christian Jordanian couples who have marital conflicts because of the intervention of the husband's family of origin - especially the husband's mother- in their marriages. His aim is to help these couples to reach a better marital life and to let the biblical truth dominate over the cultural truth in their marital relationship without hurting the cultural truth. The therapist is using the cognitive behavioral therapy in integration with theology to help these couples to attain that objective.

Consequently, the structural argument in this thesis-project will move from the sociological and cultural studies to the related psychotherapeutic studies and then to biblical and theological studies.

The Sociological and Cultural Studies

Mukadimat Laddirrasat al Mujtama' al Arabi [Introductions to Study Arab Society], by Hisham Sharabi (1981)

Sharabi did a tremendous study about the Arab Society. The extended family is the common form of family in the Arab world. The father is the authority figure in the Arab world families. On the other hand, the main job of the wife is to give birth to a baby boy and to raise her children. Sharabi tackled the structure of the Arab families who consider the baby boy, especially the firstborn baby, as their most precious property. Sharabi described the firstborn baby boy as 'his mother's spirit' and 'the one whom his mother's heart loves'. In other words, Sharabi described the special bond that the mother has with her firstborn baby boy. In addition to that, Sharabi believes that Arab families in all Arab societies consider their sons as the source of continuity for their families' existence as well as the social security for their parents. Therefore, sons are valuable for their families of origin.

According to Sharabi, consanguineous marriage is the dominant kind of marriages in Arab societies. Sharabi's book has helped the writer to get an idea about the family system in the Arab world.

Mushkilat al-Shabab al-Mu'aser: Dirasa Maidania Lil-Shabab al-'Urduni [The Youth Problems: A Field Study for the Jordanian Youth], by Ahmad Thaher (1985)

After using the book written by Sharabi, the writer used the book written by Thaher to focus more on the Jordanian society. Thaher presents the economical difficulties in Jordan as the main obstacle for males to marry at a young age. Therefore, most of the young males depend on their families of origin to financially support their

marriages. This support may include building apartments for their sons to live in. The financial support of families of origin for their sons' marriages may put them under a financial pressure that could extend for many years. Accordingly, the families of origin intervene in selecting their sons' wives. They mostly choose these wives according to three standards. They want these wives to be (a) from their relatives, (b) very young, and (c) less educated than their sons. Usually, sons are obliged to accept the choice of their families of origin if they want to get married because they are financially dependant on them. After their marriage, sons can not immediately live financially independent from their families of origin. As a result, conflicts between the sons and their spouses start to appear.

Thaher took two samples of the Jordanian young males. The first sample was from young males who were less than eighteen years old, whereas the second sample was from young males who were over eighteen. He asked both samples about their points of view concerning marriage. Their replies were various and sometimes contradicted themselves. Their evaluation of whether they would marry or not mostly concentrated on the experiences that their friends have in marriage. Thaher stresses that the main reason for making the decision to marry is to have a sexual relationship, although just a few percentage of the two samples mentioned it. According to Thaher, the results were not convincing and it reflected the lack of having marriage education in Arab societies. It also reflected the 'shame culture' that is present in the Arab world with respect to sexual issues.

Al-Nasaq al-Qarabi fe al 'Urdun: Dirasa fe al-Amthal al-Sha'beia [The Family Relationship System in Jordan: A Study Through the Public Proverbs], by Amal Haraka (1989)

Haraka tackles the marriage and family issues in the Jordanian society by using proverbs. She describes the characteristics that the family of origin expects to see in their son's future wife by using Jordanian proverbs. Furthermore, she uses these proverbs to describe marriage among relatives, especially that between first cousins which is considered as the most common type of marriage in the Jordanian society. According to Haraka, marriage between relatives is widely spread in the Jordanian society, especially among the Bedouins and those who live in villages. She mentions the dangers of the consanguineous marriage in Jordan from the mental and physical perspectives. Jordanians consider marriage as a partition and allocation.

According to the study that Haraka did on the Jordanian proverbs, the mother in law has to accept the fact that her daughter in law has married her son and consequently she should have a relationship with her. In addition, she blames her son for getting married and for bringing his wife to be part of their family. The writer of the thesis project has noticed that the mother still blames her son despite the fact that she is the one who chose that wife for him. For that reason, the mother in law-daughter in law conflict appeared.

Haraka's book is an important source in the thesis-project because she discussed the family relational system in the Jordanian society by studying the Jordanian proverbs. The concentration in this thesis project was mainly on two significant points of Haraka's study of proverbs about marriage: (a) the intervention of the family of origin in their

son's choice for his future wife and the characteristics that they want to see in this wife and (b) the mother in law-daughter in law conflict. It is worth noting here that Haraka just pointed out her analysis of the proverbs without giving solutions or alternatives.

Dirasa fe 'Adat wa Takaleed al Mujtama' al 'Urduni [A Study in the Traditions and Customs of the Jordanian Society], by Suliman Obaidat, (n.d.)

Obaidat mentions that Jordanian families start to plant the idea of marriage in their children's minds from their childhood. He uses the Jordanian cultural poetry to illustrate marriage in the Jordanian culture. Two main points mentioned in Obaidat's book were important for this thesis project. These two points are: (1) The bride's family asks for the approval and the blessing of the bridegroom's family of origin, because the bridegroom depends on his family of origin's financial support to get married and (2) some more characteristics that the bridegroom's mother expects to see in her son's future wife.

Obaidat clarifies that in the Jordanian culture, the young man needs the approval of his family of origin on the woman that he wants to marry. If the family of origin did not approve their son's marriage to the woman of his choice, they propose another woman to be their son's wife, and mostly he agrees with their proposal because they will pay all the expenses of his marriage. Although many young men started to choose their future wives nowadays more than before, they still cannot disregard the opinion of their families of origin, and even if they did so, the bride's family usually asks for the approval and the blessing of the bridegroom family of origin.

In addition, the mother of the future husband usually visits the future wife's home several times - before her son's proposal to his expected wife - to search for the following

characteristics in the future bride: her young age, her obedience, her beauty, her ability to do all the works of the house and her reputable family. According to Obaidat, people get married in the Jordanian society: (a) to have male children and (b) to fulfill the sexual desire.

The Psychotherapeutic Studies

Current Psychotherapies, by Raymond Corsini and Danny Wedding (2000)

In *Current Psychotherapies*, Corsini and Wedding cover every psychotherapy's basic concept by a practitioner in each approach, its effect on other therapies and the other systems' effect on it. Moreover, it deals with the current therapies from the theoretical and the practical sides, showing the psychological problems that could be treated through each therapy and the appropriate techniques to use. The aim of the therapist in using any model with clients is to help them improve. Therapists use the cognitive behavioral therapy to help clients to think as well as to act positively by adjusting their core beliefs that preserve maladaptive feelings and behaviors.

The therapist found it important to use this book in chapter one after he depicted the presence of mother in law-daughter in law conflict among Jordanian Christian couples. He is using the cognitive behavioral therapy in this thesis project to help these couples in conflict. Therefore, he utilized this book because it talks about CBT in general.

Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal, by Stanton Jones and Richard Butman (1991)

Stanton Jones and Richard Butman linked theology and psychology in their book. They tackled the theories of psychotherapy and made a critique on each of it from a

Christian evangelical viewpoint. According to Jones and Butman, the Christian faith is the truth, and we can learn from the different psychologies. The word of God is infallible, but a person can expand his understanding beyond what has been revealed in the bible.

This book was very beneficial for the writer in widening his thoughts about the integration between theology and psychology. As a Christian counselor, what he needs to do is to actualize God's image in the field of mental health. Furthermore, he needs to help his clients to glorify the Lord in their lives and that includes their marriage and family life. Most importantly, this book helps in recognizing that the bible supports the same self-consciousness of cognitions like the cognitive behavioral therapy.

Al-Tawjeeh wa al-Irshad al-Nafsi [Psychological Guidance and Counseling], by Ahmad Al-Zo'bi (2003)

In his book, Al-Zo'bi covers the fundamentals, the theories, the methods and the branches of counseling and guidance, the ways of collecting information about the client such as observation and events recording, the counseling process, the counselor (his/her character, responsibilities and skills) and the planning for preparing counseling programs, specifically at schools.

This book helped the counselor in particular to have more general ideas about Beck's cognitive therapy, which helped him in writing chapter one of his thesis-project. Furthermore, the writer gave special attention to marriage and family guidance and counseling sections in this book. From these sections, he learned more about (a) the aims of doing marriage and family therapy, (b) conflicts among marital couples and (c) the

intervention of relatives in couple's marital lives, its dangers and some practical ways to deal with it.

Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders, by Aaron T. Beck (1976)

This book is one of the basic background readings because its author contributed in the early 1960s to the beginnings of CBT, which is the therapy approach that the counselor is using in this thesis project. Beck clarified that therapists can not ignore the cognitive realm inside their patients. Accordingly, therapists need to help their patients to catch the automatic thoughts that they have between a specific event and their emotional response.

A psychological problem and its healing are both related to the cognitions or thoughts of patients. On the other hand, the importance of patients' cognitions does not obscure the significance of their emotions. Therefore, as therapists, we get to the emotions of patients through their thoughts. Consequently, correcting the patients' core beliefs lead to adjusting their improper emotional reactions.

Clinician's Guide for Mind over Mood and its Manual Book Mind over Mood: Change How You Feel by Changing the Way You Think, by Christine Padesky & Dennis Greenberger (1995)

The therapist considers this book and its manual as one of the main books that gave him a general background on the therapeutic part of his thesis project. The authors of the book give practical ways for therapists to help clients apply cognitive behavioral therapy and to make summary records for their learning. Also, therapists can discover the areas in which their counselees are confused.

The therapist used this book in his thesis project particularly in showing the importance of setting therapy goals. Using the manual book helped to clarify the process through which clients may become aware of the automatic thoughts that affect their physical reactions, behaviors and moods and to reach for alternative or balanced thoughts. Accordingly, changing their ways of thinking will cause a change in their feelings.

The Family Therapy Treatment Planner, by Frank Dattilio & Arthur Jongsma (2000)

This book is a time saving step-by-step reference that helps therapists to arrange treatment plans for several ‘behaviorally based family problems’. By using the chapter on Family-of-Origin Interference, the therapist got some ideas on how to set the long term goals that couples, who are in conflict because of the intervention of the husband’s family of origin, need to reach.

The American Institute for Cognitive Therapy. Relationship Enhancement, (2003).

It is worth noting here that in addition to the newspaper articles and the various significant books used especially in chapter one, the writer searched the internet and utilized the above literature. This literature helped a lot in highlighting some of the typical automatic thoughts amongst couples who are in conflict. He listed some of these thoughts in order to help couples in conflict to recognize that these automatic thoughts may add to their distress. The counselor found this literature especially important in his thesis project for couples in conflict to understand what is meant by the negative automatic thoughts so that these couples distinguish them. This is a major first step for couples in conflict to accomplish so that they later on are able to move to another stage of reassessing these thoughts and changing them into positive thoughts.

Love is Never Enough: How Couples Can Overcome Misunderstanding, Resolve Conflicts, and Solve Relationship Problems through Cognitive Therapy, by Aaron Beck (1988)

This book forms one of the two main literatures that the writer has used with respect to applying CBT with couples. By usage of the cognitive approach, couples may attain more true and rational conclusions about each other as a replacement for the baseless judgments or deformed images that they have about each other. Beck mentions that for couples to reach a healthy relationship and a happy marital life they should work on some essential individual qualities as well as on major skills that they need to have as a couple. Beck provides effective interventions for the purpose of evaluating the couple's relationship. According to the writer of this thesis project, the most effective interventions are: (a) beliefs about the relationship, (b) problems in communication style and (c) psychological communication problems.

In addition, the writer found in this book some techniques and procedures that enable him to help couples to change their maladaptive thoughts. For example, he learned from this book how to teach couples certain procedures to gain good communication skills. Also, he learned how to teach couples the color zone technique to help them classify their anger level as well as to control it.

Cognitive Therapy with Couples, by Frank Dattilio and Christine Padesky (1990)

This book forms the writer's second main source concerning clinical intervention through using CBT with couples. Dattilio and Padesky depict that the objective of CBT with couples is to deal with the belief structures of each partner by encouraging restructuring toward a more fruitful relationship. The three major aspects of CBT with

couples are: (a) altering unrealistic expectations of couples, (b) correcting defective attribution in interactions of their relationship and (c) utilizing self-instructional procedures so as to reduce destructive and negative interaction. Moreover, this book is helpful in structuring cognitive therapy with couples.

Finally, Dattilio and Padesky mentioned some techniques and procedures that couples need to learn in order to change their automatic thoughts, such as teaching couples to recognize and label their automatic thoughts, to identify the concept of negative framing and to increase positives in the relationship. Other techniques involve teaching couples some imagery and role play techniques as well as communication skills.

The Biblical and Theological Studies

In the biblical and theological literature, the writer of the thesis project depended a lot on various commentaries, dictionaries and exegetical studies by different authors and editors. He used commentaries that showed the biblical and theological views that were relevant to the topic of his thesis project. Also, some Old Testament books and Old Testament theology books were specifically beneficial when the writer tackled the topic of covenant.

The Theology of the Old Testament, by Otto Baab (1931)

This book is a study of Old Testament theology. The focus in the thesis project was only on chapter five: “Salvation in the Old Testament”. Baab describes searching the scriptures to discover the covenant idea as the most fruitful inquiry, because this inquiry leads to all what is related to Israel’s faith and religious beliefs. In his thesis project, the writer pointed out the importance of the covenant’s idea of God-human

relationship, especially the redemptive relationship. The theological ideas of this book formed a solid biblical base to tackle marriage as a covenant in this thesis project.

A Christian Theology of the Old Testament, by George Knight (1959)

The writer just used chapter eighteen from this book: “The covenant”. From this chapter he concentrated in the thesis project on the word *hesedh* which is the ‘covenant-love’ relationship between God and Israel. He also reflected on that love relationship from the ancient Eastern marriages.

The Covenant in Faith and History, by Stepen Szikszai (n.d.)

This book is a summary of the bible as a whole through a study of the Lord’s covenants in the bible. The writer used this resource in the thesis project to clarify that Covenant is a bond of love between the Lord and His people. This love shows itself in the bible through using the relationship between the father and his children and through the relationship between the husband and his wife.

The Covenant of Marriage: Genesis: 2: 18- 25 and Malachi 2: 10- 16. Contact: The Ministry Magazine of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Vol. 34, No. 2, 10-13, 24-27, by Gordon Hugenberger (2004, summer)

It was the first sermon for Gordon Hugenberger on a series concerning biblical marriage at Park Street Church-Boston. In this sermon Hugenberger talked about “the covenant of marriage” from two biblical texts: Gen. 2: 18- 25 and Mal. 2: 10- 16. This sermon is a great biblical study for marriage from the previous texts. The writer used some brief and deep ideas about marriage as a covenant from this sermon when writing about covenant in the thesis project. Covenant in marriage is a triangular relationship

where the Lord is the third party. After marriage, the husband gives his loyalty to his wife. On the other hand, he downgrades his loyalty to his parents.

Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi, by Gordon Hugenberger (1994)

In this book Hugenberger clarifies the practice of marriage in ancient Israel taking into consideration the ethics and morals among the ancient Israelite society supported by illustrating the biblical view of marriage. Hugenberger examined polygamy on Old Testament texts rather than in Malachi and this examination reflects the ideal case of marriage, which is monogamy. The writer used this book in his thesis project to support the idea that marriage is a covenant. Hugenberger successfully proves that marriage is a covenant despite the fact that there is no mention for the word ‘covenant’ itself in the biblical text. Hugenberger starts proving that marriage is a covenant by a deep context’s interpretation of Mal. 2:10-16. By interpreting Mal. 2:14, he proves that the word ‘covenant’ refers to literal marriage (a covenant between a husband and his wife). Also, by referring to Gen. 2: 24, Hugenberger shows that the words ‘leave’ and ‘cleave’ reflect a covenant context. In short, According to Hugenberger, marriage is a divinely sheltered covenant between a husband and his wife.

Cherishable: Love and Marriage, by David Augsburger (1971)

This book was one of the books that helped the writer to build his background concerning marriage. Also, Augsburger provides several ideas to help couples to grow in their marriages together and to solve their conflicts. The author clarifies that marriage is not a contract, but a covenant and that the Lord is the one who joins spouses together in marriage. Therefore, Marriage is when two spouses become one body.

Tony Evans Speaks out on Divorce and Remarriage, by Anthony Evans (1995)

Before he tackled the issues of divorce and remarriage, Anthony Evans highlighted in his book that marriage is a covenant that God Himself has established. Therefore, God is the only one who can end marriage.

Husbands and Fathers: Rediscover the Creator's Purpose for Men, by Derek Prince (2000)

In this book, Derek Prince sets a guideline for the Godly husbands. He mentioned the three main relationships in human beings' lives: (a) human beings' relationship with the Lord, (b) couples' relationships with each other and (c) believers' relationships with each other. From Prince's book, the writer clarified that marriage is a covenant and that there is no lasting relationship without a covenant. Also, he used this book to show in the thesis project the roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives.

The Christian Family, by Larry Christenson (1970)

Christenson's book is divided into two parts: God's order for family and practicing the presence of Jesus. The concentration in the thesis project was mainly on three chapters taken from the first part of the book: God's order for mates, God's order for wives and God's order for husbands. Studying these three chapters in the thesis project helped in tackling the responsibilities of the husband as well as the responsibilities of the wife. The writer also used this book to clarify the different meanings for the word 'love' in the Greek language and to show the kind of love that God requires from husbands in their relationship with their own wives.

The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home, by Jack Balswick and Judith Balswick (1999)

This book covers mostly everything that any person would like to know about family life. Balswick and Balswick enrich the topics from a Christian perspective and enhance them from the social sciences view. In this thesis project, the focus was on husband's headship in modern home. It is important to know the meaning of husband's headship and mutual submission in the bible to figure out the meaning of husband's headship in modern home. Usually, people mix between the headship and the authority of males. Nowadays, there is a resistance to traditional marriage. Furthermore, self-centeredness and individuality characterize modern marriages. Accordingly, the view of husband's authority has become weak and not clear. Therefore, husbands need to know how to follow the example of Christ in their headship.

The Marriage Masterpiece: A Bold New Version for Your Marriage, by Al Janssen (2001)

Al Janssen gave a wide background about marriage from a biblical perspective. He clarified God's marriage masterpiece. God planned a marriage in which (a) spouses are committed to each other as the Lord is committed to His people, (b) spouses enjoy a passionate marriage as the 'romantic' image of God with His beloved people, (c) spouses protect their marriage and fight for it as the Lord Himself asked His beloved people, Israel, to come back to Him, (d) spouses stay faithful to each other as the Lord's faithfulness to His people and (e) spouses lay their lives down to one another as Jesus shed His priceless blood to save the church. Having the previous background in mind, the writer used Janssen's book in the thesis project because it stresses that God's desire is

a life-time unity between husband and wife. The Lord hates divorce (Mal. 2:16) and His desire for spouses is to be committed to each other in a marriage covenant and to have a life-time unity whereby only death can give a way for one spouse to separate from the other. In the Jordanian culture today, marriage is a contract for many people. This book helps in showing that marriage is a covenant not a contract and that people today need to learn from the word of God to be faithful to each other.

Five Essentials for Lifelong Intimacy, by James Dobson (2005)

In this book James Dobson tackles five essential tools to help couples to enjoy a lifetime close relationship with each other. The focus in this thesis project is on one of Dobson's five essential tools which is spouses' willingness to communicate. It is essential for spouses to learn the art of communication, because it helps them to have a meaningful time of conversation and therefore they can work on deepening the intimacy in their marriage.

The Language of Married love, by Preston Dyer and Genie Dyer (1988)

The aim of this book is to help couples enrich their marriages. This book is a practical book with a lot of exercises for couples and its material based on the word of God. It is a helpful book to assist couples to communicate well. Spouses can share their thoughts, ideas, wishes, needs and they can feel the understanding of each other through communication. Accordingly, they can have a suitable environment for intimacy to grow in their marital relationship.

Al-Soura al-Kitabieh lel-Zawaj: Afkar wa Ta'amoulat Kitabieh lel-Zawjain [The Biblical View for Marriage: Biblical Ideas and Meditations for Couples], by Brouce Wilkinson (2005)

In this book, Wilkinson tackles important topics of marriage. These topics are: the roles and responsibilities of husband and wife, the right relationship with in laws, money, sex, romance, communication and intimacy. Wilkinson divides each chapter of his book into (a) a lecture about the topic, (b) readings from the bible, (c) some questions for couples to think about and discuss and (d) meditations.

This book gives a biblical background for the previous topics. Furthermore, it is used in the thesis project to illustrate the biblical teaching about communication as well as to show the importance of communication skills among marital couples.

The Complete Husband: A Practical Guide to Biblical Husbanding, by Lou Priolo (1999)

This book is a great source for every husband to live a biblical and happy marital life. It gives a wide view about what each husband needs to know in order to please his wife by being a 'lifetime student' for his wife. Furthermore, the writer of the thesis learned more about communication from a biblical perspective. He used this book in discussing verbal and nonverbal communication as well as the tone of voice in communication. Communication is not only a biblical responsibility, but it is also a skill that people need to learn.

His Needs Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage, by Willard Harley (2001)

In his book, Harley helps couples to learn how to fall in love and how to stay in love. Each of the two sexes has his/her own needs. Many times spouses fail to help each other to reach happiness in their marital life because of not meeting each other's

emotional needs. This book gives a wide picture concerning the needs of males and females in marriage. It is used in the thesis project to tackle particularly the wife's need for conversation. Conversation helps the wife to feel united to her husband and it creates a warm atmosphere for couples. Thus, conversation helps spouses to have a deep physical relationship.

So You're Getting Married: The Keys to Building a Strong, Lasting Relationship, by H. Norman Wright (1985)

This is a comprehensive book that covers all the aspects of marital life in a way that helps couples to commit themselves to each other after their marriage. It is a great marital enrichment book. This thesis project focuses on two areas of marriage commitments. These areas are: (a) couples' commitment to communication and (b) their commitment to control their anger. Communication in marital relationships is like the blood to the body. Wright gives different ways through which counselors can help couples to deal with anger. The most practical way that he mentioned is to stop giving a way to anger by stopping the negative thoughts and behaving in a positive way.

One Flame: How to Weather the Five Winds in Your Marriage, by Gary Smalley (2002)

In marriage, spouses are united into one. Oneness does not mean that spouses are the same, but that they have learned how to realize their differences correctly in a way that shows their respect and love toward each other. Smalley clarifies some points that couples need to learn to solve their conflicts. These points include concentrating on their oneness as well as learning how to fight right. In addition, Smalley explains some ways that couples need to learn to solve their marital conflicts. These ideas helped in writing about conflict resolution in the thesis project.

Peacemaking for Families: A Biblical Guide to Managing Conflict in Your Home, by Ken Sande and Tom Raabe (2002)

Sande and Raabe provide guidance for families to reach a healthy marriage by being peace-makers instead of being peace-breakers. This book gives some ideas about peacemaking in marriage. The writer used this book specifically to tackle the area of forgiveness in marriage. As Christians, we need to learn that the Lord Himself forgave our sins (1 John 1: 9). In order to forgive each other, couples need to learn some practical methods so that not to give an opportunity for any offensive incidents in their lives to be a hindrance in their relationship with each other.

From Forgiven to Forgiving: Learning to Forgive One Another God's Way, by Jay Adams (1994)

Adams describes forgiveness as the oil that keeps marriage's machinery going on without a complete breakdown. The Lord forgave our sins once and for all. Therefore, He expects us as believers to forgive one another. Accordingly, partners need to seek forgiveness for each other when either of them commits an offence towards the other. The thesis project depicts the importance of forgiveness in marriage life as clarified in Adam's book.

Talking Your Way Out of Trouble: Prayer's Power in Marriage. Focus on the Family, 30(3), 18, 19, by Mitch Temple (2006, March)

Many times when spouses are at the end of the rope in their marital relationship, prayer can bring healing more than anything else in their marriage. Therefore, prayer is a functional tool to save marriage and to keep intimacy in spouses' relationship. Using this

article in the thesis project helps to highlight the importance of prayer among couples in conflict so as to overcome their crisis.

Parent's Roles in the Ancient World. Biblical Illustrator, 14(1), 39-41, by R. Wayne Jones (1988, Winter)

The structure of the community during Old Testament times was a father-centered community with large families. It was a patriarchal society as the Jordanian society is still today (whereby males have superiority over females). In that society, parents were respected religiously as well as practically. The writer used this article in his thesis project to illustrate the relationship between the mother and her son in a patriarchal society. In such a society, the Israelites used to honor in a special way the mother of sons. Disrespect of mothers was forbidden in that patriarchal society. On the other hand, the role of the children was to obey and respect their parents. This historical background is important to understand the relationship between sons and their mothers as well as the intervention of the family of origin in their sons' marital lives.

Lutzer, E. (2003, May/June). What 'Honoring' Really Means. Moody, 103(5), 20, 21, by Erwin Lutzer

In this article, Lutzer focuses on the importance of applying the Lord's commandment: "honor your father and mother". Using this article in the thesis project helps to show the significance of honoring our parents and caring for them despite the fact that the wife takes socially the first place in her husband's life as well as the loyalty that he used to give to his parents before his marriage.

Before You Say "I Do": A Marriage Preparation Manual for Couples by H. Norman Wright and Wes Roberts (1997)

This book is great for premarital counseling. Couples can go through this book by themselves. Wright and Roberts cover the most important issues that couples who are going to take the step of marriage need to know to have a successful biblically-based marriage. The writer used this book in his thesis project to tackle the importance of building a positive relationship with in laws.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDY: THE STUDY OF HANNAN FAMILY

One of the pastors of an Evangelical church in Jerash city, where the counselor taught about Christian marriage several times, asked the counselor to help a couple with marital conflicts. This pastor told him that they are new members in his church. He said that the couple's marital conflicts are increasing and that they came asking him for help. So he told them about the counselor and gave them his phone number. When they called the counselor, they said that they wanted to improve their marriage. He told them that he would help them to work on their marital conflicts to achieve a better marriage, and he set a meeting with them.

Hannan Family

Hannan family consists of the husband (Aman, 35 years old), the wife (Sawsan, 24 years old) and their two daughters (Tania, 5 years old and Toleen, 1 year old). Aman and Sawsan, who are second cousins and who lived for a short time of their lives in the same house- during Sawsan's childhood-, never expected that they would get married one day. After the death of her husband in 2003, Aman's mother (Qamar) came to live with Aman and Sawsan at their house. The house consists of two bedrooms, a living room, one bathroom and a kitchenette. Qamar helps Aman to pay the rent on the house from her late husband's retirement salary that she receives on a monthly basis.

The Background of Sawsan

Sawsan was born in the year 1982 in Jerash where she used to live with her father, Sami, her mother, Wafa', her eldest sister, Fadia (25 years old) and her younger brother Ihab (22 years old).

Sawsan's mother. Her mother Wafa' was a housewife. She died in 1984 at the age of 28 as a result of gas explosion in the bathroom when she was taking a shower. Sawsan and her siblings were only very young when their mother died.

Wafa's father, Nabil, is 85 years old. Her mother, Nuaihed, who was Nabil's first cousin, died in 2005 at the age of 80. Nabil is a farmer and his wife used to help him with his work. Wafa' had two sisters and two brothers. Wafa' was the youngest. Her sisters are Nada (60 years old) and Dana (52 years old). Both of them do not work. Nada is married and living with her husband and children, whereas Dana is single. As to Wafa's brothers, Waleed is 58 years old and Wajeih is 54 years old. Wajeih is married and works as a car mechanic. On the other hand, Waleed is single and works as a car electrician. Waleed is still living with his sister Dana and his father, Nabil, in the family home.

Sawsan's father. Sawsan's parents, Sami and Wafa', got married in 1980. Sami worked as an employee in a company with a minimum wage. Sami and Wafa' used to live at the house of Sami's mother, Mervat, to save paying rent because of their bad financial situation. Mervat worked as a dressmaker at her own house.

Sawsan's grandmother from her father's side, Mervat, died in June 2005 at the age of 74. On the other hand, her husband, Muhannad, died in 1966 at the age of 40 from cancer. He used to work as an ironer in the military, whereas his wife used to work as a dressmaker. Sami, on the other hand, died in 2002 at the age of 53 because of a heart attack.

Sawsan. After Wafa's death, her three children were separated from each other. Her daughter Fadia, who was 2 and half years old at that time, and her son Ihab, who was

only 3 months old, stayed with their father and their grandmother (Mervat). However, Sawsan who was 1 and a half years old at that time did not live with them. Instead, she moved to live in the house of her father's cousin (Aman's father) for around a year and a half.

As Aman and Sawsan told the counselor, the taking of Sawsan to live at Aman's parents' house was a great help for Sawsan's father, Sami, and grandmother, Mervat, because Mervat could not take care of all three children especially that Ihab was at the time of Wafa's death just a baby who needed a lot of attention. Because Mervat worked as a dressmaker at her own house, customers from the neighborhood used to come to her house. As a result, it was hard for her to manage all three children and still do her work with her customers. Furthermore, Sami had no siblings to help him, and he could not alone take care of Fadia, Sawsan and Ihab because he used to spend most of his time at work. Therefore, he needed the help of his mother, and thus he accepted the offer of Aman's parents, and he sent Sawsan to live with them.

As to Wafa's family of origin, they were indifferent to the whole situation. They did not care about helping Sami with the children because they believed that it was his responsibility to care for his children. After the death of Wafa', they reduced their visits to Sami and the children. Nowadays, they rarely visit each other.

When Sawsan became three years old, her second cousin, Aman, was around 14 years old. As the couple told the counselor, Aman's parents found it inappropriate to keep Sawsan with them at their house because they noticed that their son had become a teenager. Therefore, they talked to Sawsan's father about Sawsan's leaving their house. Consequently, Sami sent his daughter Sawsan to an interior Christian charity school. She

stayed in that school for around 5 years, till she became eight years old. During Sawsan's time at the interior school, she used to go home with her father to spend the vacations with him, with her siblings, and with her grandmother.

At the age of eight, Sawsan left the interior school and came to live with her father and her siblings at her grandmother's house. She continued her education by going to a public school near her grandmother's house. However, she failed at the last year of her high school, and she quit studying. She stayed at home and never took a job in her life.

Sawsan's siblings. As to Fadia, Sawsan's sister, she finished the high school, and she took few secretarial courses. She got married at the age of 20, and she is living now in the southern part of Jordan, in Aqaba city. She is working as a secretary, and she has no children. Sawsan and Fadia have a close relationship as sisters, but they can not always see each other because of the geographical distance between them.

As to Ihab, Sawsan's brother, he left school before he finished high school. He started working at a young age. He is living now abroad. He left Jordan two years ago to work and live in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where he is working now as an employee in an import and export company. He is single, and he did not come back to Jordan for one visit during these two years.

The Background of Aman

Aman is the only son of his parents (Qamar, 55 years old and Sa'id, died in 2003 from prostate cancer at the age of 62). Aman has two sisters (Raneem, 36 years old and Nisreen, 32 years old).

Aman's father. Aman's family of origin lived in Jerash, the same city in which Sawsan's family of origin used to live and in which all of Hannan family relatives are still living. Aman's father, Sa'id, was an uneducated person who worked as a simple worker in a factory in the city of Jerash. Sa'id worked 9 hours a day. Sa'id married Qamar in 1969. At the time of marriage, Sa'id was 28 years old whereas his wife was 18 years old. When he used to return back home he often used to eat and then to go out of the house with his friends. Afterwards, when Sa'id used to return home, he used to directly go to bed without spending time with Qamar and his children.

As to Sa'id's family of origin, Sa'id had one brother, Fareed, who works as a taxi driver. Sa'id used to have an older sister called Fareeda. She died in 1942 at the age of 2 from meningitis. Sa'id was so young at the time of her death.

With respect to Sa'id's parents, his father, Moses, died in 1995 at the age of 82. Moses worked all his life as an ironsmith. His wife, Salma, was a housewife. She moved to live with her eldest son, Sa'id, after the death of her husband. Four years later, Salma died in 1999 at the age of 77.

Aman's mother. Qamar raised her children alone without the help of her husband. She was a housewife who was also uneducated like her husband. She gave special care for Aman as her only son. She spoiled him a great deal and treated him in a special way.

Qamar has four elderly sisters who live together in the same apartment. All of Qamar's sisters are single and they own the apartment. Sama who is 63 years old is the eldest sister. Maha is 60 years old and Noura is 57 years old. Dalal is the youngest sister. She is 50 years old. Sama and Maha used to work in a governmental institution. Sama was a secretary whereas Maha was a typist in that institution. Both of them are

retired now, but have a monthly retirement salary. On the other hand, Noura works as a dressmaker in a clothes workshop, whereas Dalal works as a sales representative for cosmetics products in a shop near her house.

As to Qamar's parents, her father, Sadeq, used to work as a store keeper in the military before he retired. Sadeq, died 9 years ago at the age of 81 from a stroke. As to Iman, Qamar's mother, she died in 1991 from a heart attack at the age of 67. She was a housewife. After her death, Qamar's four single sisters took care of their elderly father until his death in 1997.

After becoming a widow, Qamar never thought of moving to live with her four single sisters. On the contrary, because Qamar lived with her mother in law, Salma, for a few years after the death of her father in law, Qamar expected to move from her own apartment to live with her only son and his family after the death of her husband. Moreover, Qamar believes that Sawsan has to serve her and her son because this is her expected responsibility as a wife and a daughter in law.

Aman. Qamar's exaggerated pampering of Aman encouraged him to leave school at the age of 14. After that, Aman worked in a garage as a car electrician, but he just stayed for five months at his work. After that short period of time, the owner of the garage fired Aman because he was doing a bad job as well as he was not abiding by the working hours.

After that, Aman thought of working with his father Sa'id at the same factory. The owner of that factory accepted Aman's request to be a worker at his place as a favor to Aman's father. Sa'id gave his son some guidance about the importance of work. He told his son that he needs to be more responsible and serious in his new job. Qamar did

not like that guidance. She did not want her husband Sa'id to start being strict with their only spoiled son.

Aman has been working in the same factory for twenty years. He is still working today in that factory, but he currently works as a production technician. Aman describes his work as a comfortable job that allows him to take lots of breaks. He has explained to the counselor that he has stayed in his job for that reason. Aman likes to relax a lot and to take things easy. Hence, he never stayed in the factory even for an extra minute after the ending of his daily working hours.

Aman's sisters. Both of Aman's sisters, Raneem and Nisreen, are married and living in Jerash city. Both of them are housewives. They are both in good relationship with Qamar and Aman. Like their mother, the two sisters believe that it is Aman's reasonable responsibility to take care of his mother and to cover her financial needs after the death of his father. Raneem and Nisreen usually take the side of their mother against Sawsan in the entire mother in law-daughter in law quarrels.

The History of the Relationship of Aman and Sawsan

Aman's parents decided when Aman became 29 years old that it was time for him to get married. They told him that they will search for a wife for him. Aman received the news happily and was eagerly waiting for the latest news! Aman's mother started the mission of searching for a bride for Aman through visiting girls and speculating who is more suitable to be the wife of her only son.

Then, Aman's parents discussed the issue together and they decided that Sawsan would be a good wife to Aman for the following reasons:

1. Sawsan is second cousin of Aman. Aman's parents knew Sawsan very well, especially because they have raised her for a short period of time in her childhood. Thus, Aman's family of origin thought that they have the priority to take Sawsan as a wife for their son over any other man from outside the family that might propose to her.
2. Sawsan stayed during her childhood for 5 years in an interior school. Consequently, Aman's family of origin thought that she must be disciplined in a way to obey the rules and as a result they expect her to obey them.
3. Sawsan is young and beautiful. Aman's parents were specifically looking for these two characteristics.
4. Sawsan may be a more suitable wife for Aman because he is in a bad financial situation. Hence, Aman's parents thought that it would not be easy to find another wife that would accept Aman due to his poor financial situation.

After they made up their mind, Aman's parents told Aman that they have decided to propose to Sawsan to be his future wife. Aman was surprised at the beginning when he heard the decision of his parents. He was confused because he used to consider Sawsan as one of his sisters and hence he never thought of marrying her. Then, he thought (a) that she is beautiful, (b) that it was time for him to start having sexual relationship and (c) that marrying Sawsan may be his only chance of marriage because his parents were blessing this relationship. Therefore, he considered that Sawsan was the

best girl for him to marry. So, Aman told his parents that he agreed with them on their decision to make Sawsan his future bride.

After that, Aman's parents visited Sawsan's father and her grandmother to ask for Sawsan to be their son's wife. At the beginning, Sawsan's father and grandmother refused the request of Aman's parents because they believed that Sawsan might get a husband who is financially better than Aman. However, after the interventions and pressures of some elders in the family - especially the Catholic priest in Jerash who is Sami's and Sa'id's cousin- Sami and his mother Mervat accepted the marriage proposal.

The elders at Hannan family have convinced Sami and Mervat to agree to marry Sawsan to Aman pointing out two main advantages:

1. Aman is suitable to be Sawsan's husband because he is a good man and he is a relative whom they know. Therefore, he will be a better husband for Sawsan than any unfamiliar person.
2. The elders of Hannan family told Sami and his mother that they will not live all their life for Sawsan and that it is better for them to accept the request of Aman's parents and to know that Sawsan is married and is living secure at her husband's house.

After Sami and Mervat accepted the marriage proposal, they needed only one step to go ahead in Aman's wedding process and that was Sawsan's opinion! Consequently, they discussed with Sawsan the proposal of Aman's parents. Sawsan - who was shocked at the beginning when she first heard of the marriage proposal- told her father and her grandmother that she feels that Aman is exactly like her brother Ihab. Nonetheless,

because of her father's and her grandmother's insistence, Sawsan obeyed them and agreed to marry Aman.

At that point, Sawsan felt that she did not love Aman yet and that he is like her brother. Nonetheless, she thought that her love towards him will come after marriage and she thought that it is good to marry someone like Aman who loves her and who has eagerness to marry her. She felt that Aman will be a good husband who will love and care for her all through their life together.

Aman and Sawsan were engaged in May 2000 for two months. During that period, both of them were thinking that the other one is his/her right partner. Sawsan started to have romantic love towards Aman. On the other hand, Aman was looking at Sawsan as a beautiful young girl that he will be proud to have as his wife.

Aman and Sawsan got married in July 2000. After their marriage, Aman and Sawsan lived in a one bedroom apartment at the same building where the apartment of Aman's parents is located. Sawsan used to help her mother in law in cleaning her in laws' house. Also, she used to cook for her in laws many times a week in addition to cooking for her own family on a daily basis.

The life of fighting started to appear a few months after Aman and Sawsan got married. The marital couple started to have marital conflicts due to (a) lack of communication between them as partners and (b) in laws intervention. With time, serving her in laws negatively affected Sawsan's care for her daughter, Tania.

On the other hand, Aman used to go by his parents' house on a daily basis before going to work. Also, when returning back from work, Aman used to pass by his parents'

home to ask them if they need any assistance from him. In addition, he used to do all their shopping.

Then, after the death of Aman's father in 2003, Aman rented a two bedrooms apartment and his mother left her own apartment to stay with him. According to the beliefs of Aman's family of origin, Aman has the responsibility to care for his mother and therefore she should stay with him. Consequently, she is still staying with Aman and Sawsan in the same house. However, she occasionally goes to visit her four elderly single sisters who live together in the same apartment. She rarely sleeps over at their house.

Tania and Toleen

Tania is 5 years old and Toleen is 1 year old. Tania is going to a Christian kindergarten (KG) besides the house. She is now in KG2 class. Sawsan is the one who drops Tania off at the kindergarten in the morning and brings her back home at around noon. When Tania is home, Sawsan spends very little time with her. Usually, Tania spends most of her time at home playing with her sister or watching television. Sometimes, she sits besides her grandmother.

Toleen does not go to a day care center. Nonetheless, Sawsan does not spend enough time with her daughter, Toleen, because she is always busy in cooking, in cleaning the house and in covering Qamar's requests. Sawsan spends time with Toleen only when she feeds her or changes her diapers. Toleen stays most of the time in her bed either sleeping or playing alone. When Toleen cries, Qamar rarely holds her. Instead, she cries out for Sawsan to see what Toleen needs.

The Spiritual Life of the Couple

During his childhood, Aman used sometimes to go with his mother to the Catholic Church in Jerash. His mother used to send him occasionally to attend the children's Sunday school in that church. On the other hand, when Sawsan entered a Christian interior school, she learned about the Lord and she started to attend the obligatory service in the school's chapel.

As adults and prior to their marriage, neither Aman nor Sawsan used to go regularly to the church. Nowadays, Aman, Sawsan, Qamar and the children attend the Evangelical Church in Jerash because this church has its meetings on Sunday evenings. Hence, the whole family goes to the church after Aman returns back from work. Both Aman and Sawsan became Christians in this church a year ago. Also, they attend the Catholic Church in Jerash on two occasions, at Christmas and at Easter.

The Current Relationship of Aman and Sawsan

The couple's life of fighting has become a daily routine ever since Aman's mother lived with them. Qamar fights during the day with Sawsan. In addition, both women wait until Aman returns from work in the afternoon to involve him in their fights. Hence, Aman is daily stuck in the middle between his mother and his wife. Nonetheless, he never accepts any criticism towards Qamar, and he believes that obeying Qamar is above anything else. Sawsan has said, "I wish that he listens to me and that he understands my viewpoint regarding any conflict I have with his mother."

Ongoing Issues

Sawsan thinks that Aman is not protecting her from his mother. Also, she believes that Aman is passive in stopping his mother from bothering her and intervening

in her life. She told the counselor that she is upset about Aman's passive attitude.

Moreover, she feels that she does not have privacy or security in her own home. She cannot make even a small decision in her house. She needs to have Aman's permission before going out of the house. Besides, she needs to tell her mother in law where she is going. She does not have many friends because Aman socially restricts her.

On the other hand, Aman thinks that Sawsan is not taking care of his mother as she should do. He thinks that Sawsan needs to obey his mother and to serve her if she really loves him. He does not want his mother to help around the house or to occasionally cook, because he believes that this is the role of Sawsan. He says that Sawsan bothers him when she always tries to express her opinion concerning her conflicts with his mother. Aman also says that Sawsan is a stubborn person.

On the other hand, Qamar feels that Sawsan does not respect her and that she tries to take her loyal son away from her. Qamar believes that Sawsan is the one who creates problems in the family by not obeying her mother in law and not listening to her constant directions and orders. For example, Qamar wants her daughter in law to wake up early every day to start the housework, and she becomes upset if Sawsan leaves any unclean dishes in the kitchen. At the same time, Qamar's two daughters indirectly support their mother in her conflict with Sawsan by taking the side of their mother.

Aman and Sawsan never face their marital conflicts as well as the conflict between Qamar and Sawsan. Instead, Aman flees from the problems in his family and from the mother in law-daughter in law conflict by going with his friends to a nearby amusement center to play billiards. Aman and Sawsan both blame each other for their marital problems, and each one of them consider the other partner as the main reason

behind the problems that they face. Both Aman and Sawsan recognize that their marriage is in conflict and that they need help to work on their marital relationship.

Assessment

The Pre Counseling Session

The first meeting with Aman and Sawsan took 75 minutes. During this pre counseling session, the counselor collected background information about Sawsan and Aman, their families of origin, their marital relationship and Sawsan's relationship with her mother in law. The counselor used this information to draw a family map for Hannan's family.

Furthermore, he asked both of them to complete three questionnaires: (a) "beliefs about your relationship", (b) "psychological problems in communication" and (c) "problems in the style of communication" that he took from Beck (1988) (Appendices B, C, & D). He asked the couple (a) to fill the forms individually, (b) to avoid talking about their answers and then (c) to return the filled questionnaires back to him before the following session.

A Three-Generation Family Map (Genogram)

At first, the counselor drew a basic three-generation family map for Aman and Sawsan. Then, he added the main distances on it. (See Appendix E)

He clarified to Aman and Sawsan the importance of exploring their family map and its effect on their married life. His objective was to help the couple to discover the effect of the couple's families of origin on their marital relationship.

By analyzing the basic genogram with Aman and Sawsan, the counselor noticed that:

1. Aman used to leave his family in the evenings to spend time with his friends exactly as his father Sa'id used to do.
2. Aman's mother, Qamar, moved to live with him after the death of her husband, Sa'id, exactly as Sa'id's mother, Salma, moved to live with Sa'id after the death of her husband, Moses.

Furthermore, from the distances genogram, the counselor found out that:

1. Aman has a close relationship with his mother and his two sisters.
2. Qamar has a close relationship with her two daughters.
3. Sawsan has a relationship of conflict with Qamar.
4. Sawsan has a relationship of conflict with Raneem and Nisreen.
5. Sawsan has a close relationship with her sister Fadia.
6. Sawsan, Fadia and Ihab have a distant relationship with all the members of their mother's family of origin.

Results of Questionnaires

As a result of the questionnaires that Aman and Sawsan filled and returned back, the counselor determined from the "beliefs about your relationship" questionnaire some assumptions that both of them have. The main assumptions are:

1. If a partner does not tell his/her partner what is personally important to him/her, the other partner should know it without that partner saying it.
2. If a partner cares for his/her partner, then he/she would always feel affection for him/her.
3. If a partner really cares for the other partner, then he/she would do what the other partner asks him/her to do.

The counselor realized from the “psychological problems in communication” questionnaire the following points:

1. Sawsan feels inhibited in discussing her problems with Aman.
2. Sawsan cannot openly express her feelings.
3. Sawsan is afraid to ask for what she wants.
4. Sawsan is afraid that what she has to say would trigger Aman’s anger.
5. Sawsan feels that Aman talks down to her, that he does not care about her needs and feelings, and that he will use whatever she says against her in the future.

On the other hand, both Aman and Sawsan are afraid that if they start to express their feelings to each other, then they would lose their control of their emotions and would later regret what they have said.

As to the “problems in the style of communication” questionnaire, the counselor found out that Aman and Sawsan both have problems in their style of communication that frequently bother them. These problems are:

1. They always withdraw from their conversations when they get upset.
2. Aman and Sawsan talk too much and ask a lot of questions without giving each other the chance to reply.
3. They do not listen to each other or show any listening signals in the conversation of the other partner.
4. Sawsan frequently opens touchy subjects whereas Aman rarely talks about them.

5. Aman frequently shuts Sawsan up when she talks whereas Sawsan does not shut him up.

Two Individual Sessions

The counselor had an individual session with Aman and another one with Sawsan. The main purpose behind these two sessions was to recognize separately the automatic thoughts and core beliefs of Aman and Sawsan regarding the way they perceive themselves, their partners and their marital relationship, without the interference of the other partner. The counselor also reviewed with each one of them his or her results from the questionnaires.

During the individual session with Sawsan, she said that Aman sometimes emotionally and verbally abuses her. So, the counselor asked her if she faces any physical abuse, and she said no. She mainly concentrated on Aman's passivity towards his mother's intervention in their marital life. She also told the counselor that Aman and Qamar criticize her. She said that she mostly feels "like a servant rather than a wife".

On the other hand, in the individual session with Aman, he said that he expects Sawsan to obey him because he knows that wives should submit to their husbands. He said that Sawsan has to serve his mother. He also focused on Sawsan's character saying that she is a stubborn person. At the end of that session, the counselor asked him to immediately stop his emotional and verbal abuse of Sawsan.

Second Conjoint Session

During this session, the counselor highlighted to Aman and Sawsan the need for resolving their conflicts. He explained to them conjointly the main outcomes of their questionnaires. Then, he explained to them that both of them need to work together as

one unit and to collaborate together so as to improve their marriage and reduce their problems. The counselor summarized his findings regarding their case and he introduced CBT to them in simple terms. He also told them that they would study some verses from the bible that address some of their issues.

Problem Areas

From the information the counselor got from the first sessions, he believed that Aman had been a spoiled son and that he has a close relationship with his mother. Also, it was evident to the counselor that Aman has his own interests like playing billiards as a way of escaping from his family problems and from dealing with touchy issues instead of facing them. On the other hand, it was obvious that Sawsan lacks for love and care. Also, she feels disappointed, hurt and angry because of Aman's passive position towards the intervention of his mother in their marital life. Also, the counselor believed that Sawsan has a low self esteem due to the criticism of Aman and his mother.

The counselor detected several problems that negatively affect the couple's marital relationship. The partners need to work on these problems in order to reach for a better marital life. These problems are:

1. Mother in law-daughter in law conflicts because of the mother in law's intervention in the couple's marital life.
2. The couple's automatic irrational thoughts about their relationship.
3. Communication and anger problems between the marital couple.
4. The couple's misunderstanding of the meaning of covenant in marriage.
5. The couple's misinterpretation of their responsibilities and roles as a husband and a wife.

6. Aman's lack of differentiation between obeying and honoring his mother.
7. The couple's lack of forgiveness and marital conflict resolution.

The Treatment Plan

In his treatment plan, the counselor will work with Sawsan and Aman on changing their automatic thoughts and feelings. Moreover, he will work with them on several topics to help them improve their marital relationship. The counselor will help the couple to understand each other in a better way and to manage their anger. He will help Aman to differentiate between honoring and obeying his mother, and he will help Sawsan to get Aman's support. Sawsan is the key person who will change the family system. Accordingly, the final result would be reducing the marital and consequently the mother in law-daughter in law conflicts.

Setting Goals for Therapy

The first step in helping Aman and Sawsan to have a better marital life is (a) to set with them goals to reach and (b) to help them to work on fulfilling these goals. Aman and Sawsan came to therapy with a general objective which was to improve their marital relationship. The counselor worked with them on setting long term and short term goals. Then they all prioritized the goals together.

Long Term Goals

The counselor got some ideas from Dattilio and Jongsma (2000) when he prepared the long term goals. The goals to attain are:

1. Aman and Sawsan reduce the marital conflicts that result from the intervention of Qamar in their marital life. Also, the mother in law-daughter in law conflict is reduced.

2. Qamar and her two daughters accept limits concerning Qamar's intervention in Aman and Sawsan's marital life, and they also understand that this intervention might be negative.

After setting the long term goals, the counselor helped the couple to prioritize them. The counselor and the couple decided that first they would work on reducing their marital conflicts resulting from Qamar's intervention. Accordingly, mother in law-daughter in law conflict would be reduced. Then, the couple agreed that they needed to work afterwards on achieving the second long term goal.

Short Term Goals

The counselor also discussed with the clients the short term goals that the couple need to reach during the treatment time and then the counselor and the couple specified and prioritized them. The counselor would help Aman and Sawsan to attain the short term goals by using CBT, which is a short term therapy, in integration with theology. These short term goals are:

1. Helping Aman to face the issue of conflict between Qamar and Sawsan instead of fleeing from dealing with this conflict.
2. Teaching the couple to recognize, examine and respond to their automatic thoughts (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990, 76).
3. Helping the couple to change their negative beliefs about their relationship into positive beliefs, and accordingly to increase their positive behaviors in their marital relationship (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990, 76).
4. Helping each of the spouses to focus on him/her self during the treatment instead of blaming the other spouse for the marital conflicts.

5. Helping the couple to learn communication skills.
6. Helping Aman and Sawsan to manage their anger.
7. Helping the couple to know the meaning of covenant in marriage.
8. Helping Aman to know that Sawsan is the most important person in his life and that his loyalty shifts after marriage from his mother (parents) to Sawsan.
9. Helping Aman and Sawsan to know their responsibilities and roles as husband and wife.
10. Helping Aman to recognize the difference between obeying his mother and honoring her.
11. Helping Aman and Sawsan to forgive each other and to learn how to fight fairly.

In addition to the assessment sessions, the counselor planned another 14 sessions with Aman and Sawsan on a weekly basis to accomplish the therapy goals. The counselor told the couple that he would give them at many times weekly homework assignment that they need to do after each session and before the coming one.

Techniques for Recognizing, Labeling, Testing and Dismissing Automatic Thoughts

The counselor used Greenberger & Padesky (1995) and Dattilio and Padesky (1990) in applying these techniques. He gave Aman and Sawsan the 'automatic thought record' that he took from Greenberger & Padesky (1995). He clarified to them that this record helps them to gain skills to make their mood and relationship better and to attain positive changes in their behavior. He told them that he needed each one of them to fill out the record individually whenever he or she has a 'negative' thought that makes him/her feel bad, and he explained to them the way to complete the record.

By filling this record, the couple wrote down their thoughts during specific situations in which they have bad feelings. The main automatic thoughts that they had were: (a) mind reading, (b) labeling, (c) shoulds, (d) negative filter and (e) overgeneralization. Aman and Sawsan examined these thoughts by setting evidences that support these thoughts as well as evidences that do not support them. When they discovered that insufficient evidences support their automatic thoughts, they were able to think of other positive alternatives.

The counselor pointed out to them that “assumptions and core beliefs are the roots of our automatic thoughts” (Greenberger & Padesky, 1995, 152). He explained to Aman and Sawsan that their underlying beliefs are those beliefs that govern the way they think and affect the way through which they interact with each other. He also clarified to the couple that when they change their negative beliefs into positive ones, their marital relationship will improve.

Various Topics Covered in the Counseling Sessions

Communication Skills

Because CBT is an educational therapy, the counselor taught Aman and Sawsan during several counseling sessions about communication skills, and he trained them on how to improve their communication. He encouraged them to keep on working on their hot thought tracks and to work together on the communication homework assignment that he would give them later on.

It was clear that Aman and Sawsan lacked communication skills. For example, Sawsan said, “when I talk, Aman never listens to me”, “Aman will never allow me to open any issue concerning his mother”, “If I talk and say what I have to say, Aman will

be angry”, and “Aman does not want to hear about my needs and feelings”. On the other hand, Aman said, “Sawsan never listens to what I say”, and “If I do not shout, Sawsan will not give me a chance to talk”.

During the first session about communication skills, the counselor asked both Aman and Sawsan to define the word communication. Aman defined it as listening whereas Sawsan defined it as having a chance to express herself. After that, the counselor defined effective communication to them. He explained to Aman and Sawsan that effective communication involves sending a message and that each message consists of three components that have different importance in giving messages. These components are content, tone and nonverbal. The counselor told them that a researcher suggested some percentages that show how much of the message is sent through each component. These components are (a) content 7%, (b) tone 38%, and (c) nonverbal 55%. If there is a contradiction between these components, then the listener will receive a confusing message. (Wright & Roberts, 56f) So, it was very vital for Aman and Sawsan to learn how to use all the components of communication.

Moreover, the counselor asked Aman and Sawsan to sit in front of each other and to maintain eye contact. He helped them to communicate verbally and nonverbally. Then, he gave them homework to do. That homework consisted of figuring out what the Lord says through His word about communication from some verses of Proverbs. These verses were: Prov. 10:19; 12:18; 13:3a; 15:23; 15:1. He told them to read it and to think about it. Then, they all discussed it together at the beginning of the next session.

In addition, the counselor tackled the significance of careful listening (Jas. 1:19). He stressed the importance of respecting one another and of being positive when

discussing different opinions. He also clarified to them that good communication does not require agreement or having the same opinion, but it requires learning how to talk and how to listen in ways that help them to reach a common understanding (Dattilio & Padesky, 1990, 57).

During other sessions about effective communication, the counselor concentrated on the importance of communication skills in having a better marital life. He taught Aman and Sawsan two communication methods: the 'parroting technique' and the 'paraphrasing technique'.

Parroting technique means that when a partner says something, the other partner repeats exactly what his/her partner said, word for word. The counselor asked the marital couple to try the parroting technique several times until they felt that they had become better in parroting each other accurately. On the other hand, paraphrasing technique is that when a partner hears his/her partner saying something, the other partner repeats what his/her partner has said in his/her own words. The counselor asked Aman and Sawsan to try the paraphrasing technique several times until both of them had learned how to do it and until they were paraphrasing accurately what the other partner had originally said. (Hof & Miller, 1981, p. 87f)

After the communication sessions, the counselor got good feedback from Aman and Sawsan concerning their communication. Both of them said that they started to discover what the other person wants to say correctly. Moreover, they said that they had begun to understand the viewpoints of each other towards any issue that they were discussing. Aman and Sawsan learned during the sessions to talk in turn without interrupting each other. Furthermore, they learned to listen carefully to each other. With

time, Aman learned to minimize the usage of a high tone of voice to interrupt Sawsan during their conversation.

Anger Management

Prior to the counseling sessions that tackled anger management, the counselor asked Aman and Sawsan to study some biblical verses as homework. These verses were: Prov. 14:29; 15:1, 18; 16:32, Rom. 12:18-21, and Eph. 4:26, 27. At the beginning of the session, they all discussed the verses and what the bible teaches concerning anger. Furthermore, the counselor taught Aman and Sawsan about the importance of managing their anger.

He clarified to Aman and Sawsan that in this life everyone becomes angry for one reason or another. The issue, however, is how to handle anger well. Also, the counselor explained to them that (a) people need to learn how to stop getting angry for incorrect reasons and (b) they need to learn how to express their anger without hurting others. Furthermore, he made it clear to them that people become angry because of some distorted thoughts that they have and not because of external events. (Wright, 1985)

The counselor used what he learned from Beck (1988) and Wright (1985) to help Aman and Sawsan to manage their anger. He worked with Aman and Sawsan to help them catch their cognitive distortions and correct them immediately to reduce their resentment.

Some of the reasons behind Aman and Sawsan's anger were the following:

1. The criticism of Aman and his mother affected Sawsan's self esteem and triggered her anger. For example, Sawsan said: "Aman told me that he did not like my cooking today and that made me angry".

2. Aman's passivity towards his mother's intervention made Sawsan angry.
3. The couple's self talk. For example, Sawsan said: "How could he leave me and go to play billiards".
4. The couple's expectations. For example, Aman said: "Sawsan went out of the house without telling me".
5. The couple's mind reading and should statements.

Finally, the counselor explained to Aman and Sawsan that they are able to stop creating their own anger and therefore reach for a better marital relationship by expressing themselves in a positive way. They can say the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

The Meaning of Covenant in Marriage

The counselor dedicated one counseling session to discussing with Aman and Sawsan their covenant relationship in marriage. At the beginning of that session, he asked both of them if they remembered anything about the covenants that they took in front of God and in front of His people at their wedding day. Aman and Sawsan both replied that they only remembered that the priest said some sentences and that they replied to these sentences by "yes I do". Then the counselor clarified to them the meaning of covenant in general as well as in their marital relationship. He explained to them that their relationship is a triangular relationship and not a linear one because covenant in marriage adds the Lord as a third party and as the witness of the agreement between them. Therefore, God is the one who established their marriage and He is the one who joined them together. (Hugenberger, 2004)

Then, the counselor clarified to them that the words 'leave' and 'cleave' in Gen. 2:24 reflect a covenant context when man leaves his parental background and makes a

new beginning in his life in order to attain a true unity with his wife (Hugenberger, 1994).

This unity is the purpose of the Lord for marriage (Prince, 2000).

At the end of this session, the counselor asked Aman and Sawsan to study Eph. 5:21-33 and to figure out the main responsibilities of husbands and wives for the next session.

The Responsibilities of Aman and Sawsan as Husband and Wife

This is one of the most important counseling sessions because it tackles a very important and touchy issue for Aman and Sawsan; namely, Aman's loyalty to Sawsan.

During this session, the counselor clarified to them the husband and wife's responsibilities in marriage. He told them that the responsibility of the husband is to love his wife sacrificially, as Christ loves the church, enabling the wife's submission to her husband's divine authority as the church submits to the Savior (Christinson, 1970). He explained to Aman that after marriage, the husband shifts the loyalty that he had to his parents (his mother) to his own wife with whom he has a real union and with whom he becomes one flesh as mentioned in Gen. 2:24 (MacDonald, 1995).

Aman had some questions about the wife's submission and the counselor responded to his inquiries. He explained to Aman that submission does not mean inferiority. He clarified for him that in Eph. 4:22, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (NKJV), there is no command for the wife to obey her husband and that she is equal to him (MacArthur, 1986). This point was very important because one of Aman's hot thoughts was: "Sawsan should obey me". Also, Aman had some questions about his obedience to his mother so the counselor told him that he would cover the answers to his questions in the next session. At the end of this session, the counselor

asked both Aman and Sawsan to study together 1Pet. 3:7 and Gen. 2:18 as homework.

Also, he asked each one of them to list separately his/her own roles as well as the roles of the other partner.

The Roles of Aman and Sawsan as Husband and Wife

During this session, the counselor tackled with Aman and Sawsan the roles that they described for themselves and for each other. The discussion went well. Then, the counselor clarified for them the main roles for each one of them according to the word of God.

According to 1Pet. 3:7, the main roles of the husband are two: (a) to treat his wife in a selfless way and to show her his love and care and (b) to talk to her in a way that shows his honor and respect to her (Davids, 1990; MacArthur, 1986). Accordingly, the counselor encouraged Aman to show his love, care and respect for Sawsan. That action will make Sawsan feel more secure and have higher self esteem.

On the other hand, according to Gen. 2:18, the main role of the wife is to be her husband's helper. The counselor highlighted to Aman and Sawsan the fact that being a helper does not mean that the wife is inferior to the husband (Prince, 2000). Then, the counselor explained to Aman that he cannot look down to his wife because the Lord created both of them on His image (Gen. 1:27). Also, the counselor clarified for Aman that his wife is not a servant and that he needs to think of her as his other half, the one that completes him.

Honoring Parents and In Laws

The session started by studying together the fifth commandment: "Honor your father and your mother as the Lord God has commanded you..." (Deut. 5:16, NKJV).

The counselor made it clear to Aman during this session that the Lord commanded people to honor, respect and care for their parents. The counselor told Aman that the downgrading of his previous loyalty to his parents (before his marriage) and his giving first place to his wife, Sawsan, do not contradict the above commandment. In addition, he explained to Sawsan that in laws - as parents- deserve all respect and care.

On the other hand, the counselor told them that it is very important to set boundaries for Qamar's intervention in Aman and Sawsan's marital relationship. Setting boundaries enables this marital couple to reach for a better marital life and to reduce the mother in law-daughter in law conflict. He explained to them that Aman is the one who needs to work on setting boundaries for Qamar's intervention in his marriage. Then, he clarified for Aman that setting boundaries does not contradict with honoring and respecting his mother.

Forgiveness

The counselor started this session by reading and illustrating Eph. 4:32 "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you" (NKJV). Then, he read and explained 1Pet. 4:8 "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins"" (NKJV).

After that, the counselor helped Aman and Sawsan to learn to confess their faults and to forgive each other, instead of defending themselves or blaming each other. He gave them practical steps to forgive each other. He told them to keep on working on changing their thoughts about the events that cause their offence as they have learned by applying CBT. Furthermore, he counseled them to avoid using any incident against each

other. Instead, Aman and Sawsan need to work not only on keeping, but also on developing their relationship.

Conflict Resolution

Smalley (2002) was a good source that the counselor utilized in his preparation for this session. In this session, the counselor taught Aman and Sawsan to deal with their conflicts positively. He advised them to keep their love and respect for each other when they argue. Also, he encouraged them to work on fulfilling the needs of each other. He told them that they need to concentrate on their oneness and to stop being selfish.

At the end of this session, the counselor prayed for them and concluded his counseling sessions with them.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES

The Jordanian Culture

Most Christians in the Jordanian society lack biblical knowledge about marriage. What they learn about marriage is what is already embedded there in the society. Sorry to say, most of the information that people get about marriage from the society is incorrect information because of the lack of education on the subject of marriage in Jordan. In addition, Jordanians usually get most of their information from the marriage patterns around them, especially from their parents' pattern. Most of them, however, do not want to have the same pattern of marriage that their parents have.

Thaher (1985) concluded from his field study about marriage among young Jordanian males that most young Jordanian males evaluate whether they would marry or not according to the experiences that their friends have in marriage. If they found a friend happily married in his life, they want to do the same and get married. However, if one of their friends is not happy, they may disregard the idea of marrying altogether.

The writer has discovered throughout this thesis that culture in Jordan has a great influence on taking the step of marriage. Culture limits the basis for choosing the right mate to the standards that the family of origin establishes for selecting their son's future wife. Haraka (1989) mentioned that the bridegroom's mother expects her daughter in law to obey as well as to serve her husband and in laws whereby obedience means agreement according to the husband's family of origin.

As a result, many Jordanian young people do not have a chance to think of their own standards for choosing their mates. While they sometimes consider education and

common interests, young people mostly ignore the most important issue in choosing the right mate and that is the Lord's will and guidance in taking such an important step in their lives. They usually make the decision of marriage to please their families of origin. Furthermore, Jordanian females many times make the decision of marriage at a very young age because of the intervention of their families of origin.

In addition, Thaher himself is convinced that young Jordanian males' main reason for making the decision of marriage is to have a sexual relationship, even though the result of the field study that he made among two samples of young Jordanian males did not confirm this assumption. According to Thaher, marriage is a legal social contract between a man and a woman that gives them the right to start a family based on economical sharing and on having a sexual relationship with each other. Most Jordanians including Christians think of marriage in that linear way as Thaher defined it. Nonetheless, it is important for Jordanian Christians to realize that the marital relationship is a triangular relationship (with the Lord as the third party) and that marriage is a covenant and not a contract (Hugenberger, 2004).

Throughout his work on this thesis-project, the writer realized the deficiency of books that tackle the marriage and family issues in Jordan. Although references about marriage in Jordan were limited, the writer managed to obtain some good information that was useful for this thesis project. Primarily this information was about the Jordanian culture, about marriage between cousins, and about how Jordanian cultural proverbs and poetry depict marriage and family issues.

Because literature was inadequate concerning the marriage and family issues in Jordan, the writer wanted to see if the relation of mothers in law and daughters in law is

still a relation of conflict that negatively affects the marital relationships of Jordanian Christian couples. So, the writer prepared his own questionnaire, and he distributed it among Jordanian married Christians who attend several Jordanian churches (see Appendix A). This field study showed that mother in law-daughter in law conflict still exists among Jordanians today and that mother in law's intervention in the marriage of her son still affects the son's marriage negatively causing marital conflicts.

According to the culture, parents usually pay for their sons' and daughters' education. However, many families give the priority for males over females to complete their education because they perceive males as a gain for the family. Parents expect that their male children, especially the eldest one or the only one, will take care of them when they reach old age.

In the Jordanian community, children stay with their families of origin until they get married. Males, however, stay with their families of origin many times even after their marriage. When married sons live in separate houses, they usually live close to their families of origin.

Omar (1994) mentioned that extended family members live in the same geographical area. From the results of his field study, the writer of this thesis project found out that a very high percentage (76%) of married couples live close to the husband's family of origin: (a) 13.3% in the same house, (b) 24% in the same building and (c) 38.7% in the same neighborhood area of the husband's family of origin.

Moreover, the Jordanian society is a clannish society. Thus, marriages among relatives, including first cousin and second cousin marriages, are still popular in Jordan as

Khoury & Massad (1992) discovered from their field study. Mostly, families of origin choose the sons' brides from the family relatives and sons usually accept that choice.

On the other hand, most Jordanian young males do not gain enough income to take the step of marriage by themselves. Therefore, they depend on their family of origin's financial support to take that step. Accordingly, the family of origin interferes in the son's choice of his future wife, and later on in the marital relationship itself. Also, Obaidat (n.d.) points out that according to the Jordanian culture, the family of origin works as one unit to help the son choose his future mate. So, in most marriages, the bridegroom's mother- who usually has a close relationship with her son- chooses her daughter in law. Then, after her son's marriage to the girl of her choice, the mother in law usually has a relationship of conflict with her daughter in law. From his field study, the writer of this thesis project found that from a great to a very great extent of the sample placed mother in law-daughter in law conflict as an outcome of the Jordanian culture.

Integration between Theological, Biblical and Therapeutic Foundations

Most of the random sample in this field study placed a premium to a very high extent on understanding the biblical truth concerning the husband's relationship with his wife and his parents as the key solution for mother in law-daughter in law conflict. In chapter two of this thesis, the writer set the biblical and theological foundations for marriage and family. In chapter four, the counselor integrated between theology and cognitive behavioral therapy in his therapy plan to help Aman and Sawsan to deal with the conflicts that result from Qamar's interference.

In cognitive behavioral therapy, there is a direct connection between people's thoughts and beliefs and their physical reactions, behaviors, and moods in the different

situations of their lives (Greenberger & Padesky, 1995). The key purposes behind cognitive behavioral therapy are to get rid of systematic biases that people have in their thinking and to change their interior beliefs (Corsini & Wedding, 2000). Accordingly, by using cognitive behavioral therapy, the counselor wanted to lessen or modify Aman and Sawsan's unnecessary emotional reactions. Therefore, he utilized cognitive behavioral therapy to help Aman and Sawsan to think in a different manner, in the direction of their marital relationship, than they were accustomed to think. Also, the examination of Rom. 12: 2 shows that the governing part of human beings that leads to renewing them as whole is the mind. Therefore, renewing the mind leads to renewing the human being as a whole. (Henry, 1991) Accordingly, the counselor integrated between CBT and theology to help Aman and Sawsan to reduce their marital conflicts and to reach a better marital life.

Therefore, the counselor believes that utilizing this integration between theology and CBT is very beneficial to help Jordanian Christian couples who have conflicts because of the intervention of the husband's family of origin. Moreover, he believes that this integration gives a way for the word of God to work in His people's hearts and change them. In the writer's opinion, this integration helps them to live according to the word of God, to live as His sons and daughters whose main aim in this life is to glorify Him in all aspects of their lives including their marriages. Furthermore, this integration helps partners to discover their maladaptive thoughts and to recognize the influence of their irrational thoughts on their marital relationship. An integrative perspective also enables them to work on their marital relationship and to see the positive sides of it.

Throughout this thesis project, the writer highlighted the main theological and key biblical subjects that couples need to learn about. These topics enable marital couples to learn how to deal with the influence of the husband's family of origin and to reach a biblically based marital life. These subjects are: (a) marriage as a covenant, (b) the responsibilities and roles of husbands and wives, (c) honoring parents and in laws, (d) communication and anger management and (e) forgiveness and conflict resolution. Understanding these key subjects helped Aman and Sawsan- and will help other Jordanian couples- to eliminate a lot of their misconceptions about family and marriage and to reach for better marital life.

Comments on the Case Study

Assessment

From his intervention with the Hannan family, the counselor learned the importance of taking the Jordanian culture into consideration while helping Aman and Sawsan. The knowledge and the understanding of the cultural background of marriage in Jordan have been essential. This expanded awareness enabled the counselor to work better with Aman and Sawsan. Refined sensitivity also made it possible for him to help them reach better marital life by reducing their marital conflicts and the mother in law-daughter in law conflicts without hurting the culture.

Moreover, the pre counseling session, the individual interviews as well as the questionnaires that Aman and Sawsan had filled out at the beginning were the first steps to start identifying the couple's automatic thoughts, assumptions and underlying beliefs. After detecting the problem areas of the couple, and discussing the conflicts that they have in their marital life, it was clear that there is a mother in law-daughter in law

conflict, a problem in the couple's communication and anger management and a misinterpretation of the biblical truth regarding marriage and family.

Setting the Counseling Objectives

In his field study, the writer wanted to determine how Jordanian Christian couples see the solution to the mother in law-daughter in law conflict. The results of the study showed that couples think that from a great to a very great extent the key to solving this conflict is for the mother in law to stop intervening in her son's marital life and/or for the wife to understand that this intervention is an outcome of the Jordanian culture.

On the other hand, only from a low to moderate extent of this field study the sample said that the key to solving mother in law-daughter in law conflict is in the husband's attitude towards this conflict. However, the counselor believes that the husband has a major role to play in solving this conflict. Thus, he planned to help Aman (a) to give his support for Sawsan, (b) to understand his wife's feelings regarding his mother's conflicts with her, and (c) to recognize and change his wrong beliefs.

In addition, the results of this field study indicated that the husband to a great extent is trapped in the middle between satisfying his mother and satisfying his wife. This was clear in the case study discussed here, because Aman felt stuck in the middle. Accordingly, he was accustomed to flee from the house in order not to have to face the conflict between his wife and his mother.

The counselor realized from the beginning that Aman came to counseling believing that it was his opportunity to resolve his conflicts with Sawsan, whom he blames for their marital conflicts. He wanted to live a good marital life in a home free of

conflicts, but at the same time he wanted to continue caring for his mother because he was her only son.

Understanding the Jordanian culture and knowing the closeness of the relationship between the only son and his mother in the Jordanian society helped the counselor to plan to encourage Aman to set boundaries on his mother's interference. At a later stage of therapy; that is, after Aman began to understand the biblical truth about his relationship with his wife and mother, he would be better equipped to draw boundaries in a biblically-appropriate manner.

At first, Aman and Sawsan came to the counselor with a general objective to solve their marital conflicts. Initially, the counselor was able to help Aman and Sawsan to specify and prioritize their goals. He concentrated with them on the short term goals that all of them wanted to achieve. He explained to them that he wanted throughout the counseling sessions to teach them how to achieve their short term goals through the integration between CBT and theology. He told them that after reaching these goals, they still need to continue to work on their marriage to reach the long term objectives. In the counselor's opinion, achieving the short term goals will change the family system of the Hannan family.

Progress of Counseling Sessions

The counselor believed that in order to achieve the short term goals, it was essential for him to first work on the couple's irrational thoughts by using CBT techniques. He believed that Aman and Sawsan need first of all to learn how to identify their hot thoughts, to examine them and then to think of either alternative or balanced thoughts. This step was an important one to target and change Aman and Sawsan's

incorrect core beliefs. Thus, the counselor explained and simplified CBT to them, and he worked with them on their automatic thought records, clarifying that these records are a continuous process throughout the counseling sessions.

The counselor told Aman and Sawsan that in their therapy sessions they would work together by using CBT in an integrative way with the bible, and they agreed to do that. Anderson (1990) wrote: "In our counseling we need to look for the moment when the client seeks the Word of God, has a 'faith in the Word of God' that will lead to the occasion for the bible to be used" (p. 127). Because Aman and Sawsan are new Christians, they were ready to learn from the word of God. Therefore, the counselor explained to them about the integration process of therapy and gave them the Applied Bible Commentary as a gift in order to understand the biblical verses with greater clarity.

Moreover, it was evident how much the couple lacked communication skills and anger management, from the questionnaires they filled out as well as from the individual and conjoint interviews. Hence, the counselor wanted in the first sessions with them to concentrate on teaching them about communication as well as about dealing with their anger.

The counselor's aim was to help Aman and Sawsan to improve their communication skills, taking into consideration that the main touchy subject in their communication is the mother in law-daughter in law conflict. At first, he helped the couple to work on their verbal and nonverbal communication. He helped them to give attention to each other when they talk, to show signs of listening and to talk in turn. He encouraged Sawsan a lot to express her self, to say whatever she would like to say and to tell Aman what she wants. On the other hand, he worked with Aman to stop talking

down to Sawsan, to lower the tone of his voice and to try to understand Sawsan's point of view when she talks. As a result of the therapy, the couple was able to improve their communication skills.

After that, it was important for the counselor to work at this stage on helping the couple to manage their anger as well as to stop creating their own anger. He helped Aman and Sawsan to catch their cognitive distortions and to correct them immediately so as to reduce their resentment. Moreover, he helped Sawsan to raise her low self esteem. The counselor told Aman that his criticism and his misinterpretation of his authority negatively affect Sawsan's self esteem and trigger her anger. Then, he encouraged Aman to use his headship in the right biblical way in order to have a happy marital life.

It is worth noting here that the couple's work on changing the negative influence of their automatic thoughts during the counseling sessions in addition to the communication techniques and anger management helped them to communicate better with each other. Furthermore, achieving this goal increased the couple's hopefulness to accomplish the other short term goals.

It is important to clarify that Aman came for therapy expecting the full unconditional obedience of Sawsan to him and to his mother. Aman had two main wrong core beliefs that opened the door for marital conflicts and added to the mother in law-daughter in law conflict. The first core belief of Aman was about the submission of his wife that he misinterpreted as obedience and inferiority. Second, Aman believed that honoring and respecting his mother is the same thing as obeying her. This has been a touchy issue for Aman. Besides, Aman misunderstood the meaning of 'leave' and

‘cleave’, and he did not give his first loyalty to Sawsan. As a result, Aman moved away from the Lord’s purpose in creating Eve for Adam.

At this stage, it was essential for the counselor to work on explaining to the couple that marriage is a covenant and that it is important to know God’s purpose for marriage. His goal in therapy was to stress on the biblical truth (a) to correct the couple’s misconception of the word of God, (b) to help them realize their roles and responsibilities and (c) to help them differentiate between honoring and obeying Qamar.

In the last therapy sessions, the counselor helped Aman and Sawsan understand the biblical truth about forgiveness and concentrated on the significance of forgiving each other as the Lord has once and forever forgiven the sins of those who believe in him. Moreover, he worked with the couple to help them focus on their oneness and to fight fairly.

Outcomes

The counselor discovered through this therapy process how the Lord dealt with Aman and Sawsan to reach a better marital life. At the end of the sessions, Sawsan was able to change the negative feelings that she had into positive ones by changing her thoughts. She was able to work on her irrational underlying beliefs. Aman was able to understand Sawsan’s feelings regarding his mother’s conflicts with her. He started to deal with Sawsan in a respectful way. Furthermore, when Sawsan knew that Aman began to understand her feelings and viewpoints, she started to feel more secure because she knew that her husband was there to help and support her. She was happy to feel Aman’s love and care for her. Also, Sawsan knew that she is the one who has the first place socially in Aman’s life. She felt more secure when Aman started to gradually

transfer his loyalty from his mother to her. She no longer felt inferior or like a servant in her house. She began to see herself as Aman's helper.

Because her husband started to show her his love more than before, Sawsan began to submit to him as a reaction to his love. The tension inside the house and inside the marital relationship was decreased a lot. When Aman was able to communicate better with her about his needs, she no longer misinterpreted his needs as orders that she has to obey out of fear of his anger. Instead, she was happy to fulfill his needs, and she stopped focusing only on her needs. Aman and Sawsan were able in the end to forgive each other. As a result, the marital relationship between the couple was positively affected.

As to their spiritual growth, Aman and Sawsan understood the biblical frame of their marriage. They told the counselor that they found the home work he gave them very beneficial to their spiritual life. They were enthusiastic to study the word of God and to know His will for their lives. As a result of all the above, their spiritual life was positively affected.

As to their relationship to Qamar, Aman and Sawsan started to deal with her in a different way built on the biblical truth - instead of the cultural truth - without hurting the cultural truth. They honored and cared for her. At the same time, however, they became closer to each other. They started to avoid giving Qamar a chance to continue interfering in their marital life. Gradually, Aman started to take steps in setting boundaries for his mother's intervention. Because he started to support Sawsan, Qamar began little by little to reduce her intervention in their lives and to give her son a chance to strengthen his marital relationship. As a result, the conflict between Sawsan and Qamar was gradually reduced. Furthermore, the change in Qamar's attitude encouraged Aman to try to help

his mother (and his sisters) to understand and accept the boundaries he established. It is worth noting that Qamar started to sleep over once a week at one of her daughters' houses. She also began to go to her sisters' house to spend the weekend with them from time to time.

In the end, Sawsan had more privacy and space, and she started to give more attention and care to Tania and Toleen. Aman began to go once a week to the amusement center to be with his friends instead of going on a daily basis to escape from facing conflicts. As a result, Aman and Sawsan found themselves spending more time with each other and with their two daughters.

Personal Assessment

The writer personally gained a lot throughout his preparation of this thesis. Knowing and understanding the Jordanian culture in depth helped him a lot to understand more the behavior of the people around him. His understanding of the culture enabled him to know more about how Jordanian people think, what they believe in and why they act the way they do. It made him put together some pieces of the puzzle concerning the attitudes, reactions, thoughts and feelings of his relatives, neighbors, and friends.

Since childhood, he knew about the mother in law-daughter in law conflict in Jordanian society. Sorry to say, but some mothers in law and their daughters in law in his neighborhood area go regularly to fortune tellers to make amulets. They believe that these amulets bring them good luck and protect them from the harm of mothers/daughters in law. Also, when he became an adult, the writer used to recognize that many of his married friends were spending most of their time with their mothers at the house of their

families of origin. This time was more than the time that they used to spend privately with their wives at their own houses.

Moreover, a lot of his Jordanian acquaintances had married their cousins, and hence the mother in law is the aunt of her daughter in law. Nonetheless, after marriage the close relationship between the aunt and her niece deteriorates. Instead of preserving the close relationship that they have, the mother in law and her daughter in law begin to have a relationship of conflict.

In addition, the writer found out that in some Jordanian families, the family of origin goes to the extreme of asking the husband who cares about his wife to choose between them and his wife. This issue puts the husband in a difficult situation, and he usually does not know how to react. In other words, the family of origin tries to test the husband's priority.

Furthermore, after his marriage in the traditional way, the writer's father stayed in the same house with his parents. The writer remembers that living with his grandparents had restricted his mother's freedom and privacy. He noticed also that his father's family of origin used to know about his parents' private marital issues and to give their opinions and directions! During his youth, the writer decided that he did not want to have a marriage pattern similar to that of his parents.

After he took his bachelor's degree, his parents and relatives decided that it was time for the writer to get married to one of his cousins. However, he explained to them that he did not want to follow their pattern of marriage. He clarified to them that he wanted to seek the will of God in his choice of the right mate and the right time for his marriage.

A few years later, the writer met his Lebanese wife after he went to Lebanon to do his Masters degree. They married in Jordan. When he got married, he moved to live with his wife in a small apartment next to his work. During the first marital years, when people met his wife, instead of asking her if she was happy in her marriage, they usually asked her about the attitudes and actions of her mother in law and if she was on good terms with her!

From the beginning of his marriage, the writer set boundaries for any intervention of his family of origin in his marital life because he felt that their marital issues need to be private. At the same time, he and his wife care for his parents. They honor them and show them love. It is worth noting that in their marital relationship, the writer and his wife always have close friendship and good communication together. They both seek the word and the will of God for their marriage, perceiving their marital relationship as a covenant. They have a clear understanding of the biblical truths concerning marriage and family, and they still seek to learn more.

Working on this thesis project enriched the writer's knowledge about Jordanian culture as well as the family and marriage issues. He also read a lot of biblical, theological and counseling books. All the literature he used enriched his own marriage. His preparation for this thesis project helped the writer a great deal to realize that he had taken the right steps in his choice of a wife as well as in his marriage and family relationships. This thesis project was a confirmation that his marriage was moving in the right track.

On the other hand, studying the case of Aman and Sawsan showed the writer the great need for people in Jordan to work on getting rid of the wrong beliefs that they have

and to see the biblical truth in order to have better marital life. He learned from his experience with Aman and Sawsan the important role that Christian marriage and family counselors can play in helping people to see the will of God for their marriage and family life. He learned how the integration between theology and psychotherapy plays a great role in changing people's lives positively. In addition, he learned how he can be, as a Christian counselor, a tool in the Lord's hands that He uses to help His people to glorify Him in their lives.

The writer learned a great deal about the significance of having an individual session when he met with both Aman and Sawsan. These separate sessions revealed a lot of Aman and Sawsan's individual automatic thoughts and underlying beliefs, without the interference of the other partner. As a counselor who is familiar with the culture, he noticed that the wife comes to the counseling sessions full of cooperation and eagerness to work on her marital issues. This was the case of Sawsan. On the other hand, Aman, like other Jordanian males in general, came alert during the first sessions wanting to make sure that there will not be any criticism toward his mother during the counseling sessions. The writer realized also that working with Aman and Sawsan and getting good results have confirmed the effectiveness of his therapy of using CBT in integration with the bible.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Jordanian society is a patriarchal society. In this society, males have the authority over females, the father has an authority over his wife and his children and, the brother has an authority over his sisters and younger brothers.

Moreover, the Jordanian family is an extended family. As a result, many marital Jordanian couples do not recognize their need for professional counseling. They usually expect that the elders of the family would help and advise them when they face any conflict.

Furthermore, because Jordanian society is a patriarchal society, it becomes the first main job for the wife to deliver a baby boy. Consequently, boys have special relationships with their mothers, and parents consider their son as their future social security.

As a consequence of all the above, it is not an easy task for the counselor to help the husband to transfer his loyalty and priority from his parents when he is single to his wife after he marries. Also, many sons can not even take the step of marriage without the financial support of their parents. Hence, helping these couples to deal with the influence of the husband's family of origin on their marital relationship becomes more difficult.

The counselor believes that the usage of CBT in integration with the bible is very practical and beneficial in reducing marital conflicts between Jordanian Christian couples resulting from mother in law's intervention and in reaching a biblically based marital life. By using this integration with the Hannan family, the counselor was able:

1. To help the couple to recognize their maladaptive thoughts and core beliefs that they have about their relationship and to help them to look at their relationship positively.
2. To help them to learn the biblical truth about their marital relationship, the husband's relationship with his mother and the relationship between daughter in

law and her mother in law. Accordingly, they learned to live their marital life according to the biblical truth.

3. To help them to reduce their marital conflict as well as mother in law-daughter in law conflict.

Recommendations

It is obvious to the writer that there is a need in Jordan to have marriage and family education. The literature about marriage and family is very limited and weak. The limited books that are translated into Arabic language tackle the subject of marriage and family in a general perspective. These books are not always applicable to the Jordanian setting.

Furthermore, there is a huge need to take some steps in the direction of marriage and family education:

1. There is a need to have more literature concerning marriage and family, especially Christian literature, written by specialized people in this field, taking into consideration the Middle Eastern context.
2. There is a need for people to specialize in marriage and family counseling. There is a need in Jordan for initiating a major in this field.
3. There is a need for more projects and research concerning marriage and family in the pastoral ministry field.
4. There is a need to have family and marriage education in the Christian setting. It is vital to make Jordanian young people aware of the importance of choosing their right mates, by educating them through seminars, workshops and conferences. Moreover, it is important to do

premarital counseling and marital enrichment programs in the Jordanian Christian community.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire covers the influence of the husband's parents on the husband's marital life in the Jordanian cultural setting. The objective of this questionnaire is to stand on the reality of the relationship between the husband's parents (especially his mother) and his wife in the Jordanian society, so as to help in developing the marital relationships of Christian Jordanian couples.

Sex: a. male b. female

Age: _____ years old

Exact number of marriage years: _____ years

Are you living geographically close to the husband's family of origin? a. yes b. no

If your answer is yes to the above question, then select one of the following:

- a. You are living in the same apartment or house
- b. You are living in the same building
- c. You are living in the same neighborhood
- d. others _____

Please think thoroughly before starting to answer the questions below, and then put a circle around the correct answer.

1. To what extent do you believe that the husband's family of origin influences with his marital life?
a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

2. To what extent do you believe that this influence is negative?
a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

3. To what extent, in your opinion, do the in laws expect and believe that their son must obey them even after his marriage?
a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

4. To what extent, in your opinion, do the in laws expect their daughter in law to serve them and their son?
a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

5. To what extent do you believe that there is a conflict between the mother in law and her daughter in law?
a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

6. To what extent do you believe that the husband will be stuck in the middle between satisfying his wife and satisfying his mother?

a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

7. To what extent do you believe that the conflict between the mother in law and her daughter in law will create a conflict in the marital relationship between married couples?

a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

8. To what extent do you believe that this mother in law-daughter in law conflict is the result of the influence of the Jordanian culture on marital relationships?

a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

9. To what extent do you believe that the key to solving this conflict is that the mother in law stops intervening in the marital life of her son?

a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

10. To what extent do you believe that the key to solving this conflict is that the wife understands that the intervention of her mother in law in her marital life is the outcome of our culture?

a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

11. To what extent do you believe that the key to solving this conflict is in the husband's attitude towards this conflict?

a. low b. moderate c. high d. very high

12. To what extent do you believe that knowing the biblical truth concerning the relationship of the husband with his parents and concerning his relationship with his wife will help in solving marital conflicts?

a. low

b. moderate

c. high

d. very high

APPENDIX B

BELIEFS ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Instructions: for each of the following fifteen statements, select the number (1 to 7) of the category that best fits how much you agree or disagree. Enter that number on the line next to each statement.

AGREE: Completely (7) a good deal (6) somewhat (5)

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (4)

DISAGREE: somewhat (3) a good deal (2) completely (1)

_____ 1/ If a person has any questions about the relationship, then it means there is something wrong with it.

_____ 2/ If my partner truly loved me, we would not have any quarrels.

_____ 3/ If my partner really cared, he or she would always feel affection for me.

_____ 4/ If my partner gets angry at me or is critical in public, this indicates he or she doesn't really love me.

____ 5/ My partner should know what is important to me without my having to tell him or her.

____ 6/ If I have to ask for something that I really want, it spoils it.

____ 7/ If my partner really cared, he or she would do what I ask.

____ 8/ A good relationship should not have any problems.

____ 9/ If people really love each other, they should not have to work on their relationship.

____ 10/ If my partner does something that upsets me, I think it is because he or she deliberately wants to hurt me.

____ 11/ When my partner contradicts me, I think that he or she doesn't care for me very much.

____ 12/ If my partner contradicts me, I think that he or she doesn't have much respect for me.

____ 13/ If my partner hurts my feelings, I think that it is because he or she is mean.

___ 14/ My partner always tries to get his or her own way.

___ 15/ My partner doesn't listen to what I have to say.

Note: This questionnaire has been adapted in part from the Relationship Belief Inventory of Epstein, Pretzer, and Fleming.

The source: Love is never enough: How couples can overcome misunderstandings, resolve conflicts, and solve relationship problems through cognitive therapy by Aaron T. Beck, Pages 88f.

APPENDIX C

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN COMMUNICATION

Read the following statements. Next to each, enter the number (0 to 4) that best indicates the frequency of your feelings. Your partner should also complete this questionnaire.

- _____ 1/ I feel inhibited in discussing my problems with my partner.
- _____ 2/ It's hard for me to express my feelings to my partner.
- _____ 3/ I am afraid to ask for what I want.
- _____ 4/ I don't believe what my partner says.
- _____ 5/ I am afraid that what I have to say will make my partner angry.
- _____ 6/ My partner won't take my concerns seriously.
- _____ 7/ My partner talks down to me.
- _____ 8/ My partner doesn't want to hear about my needs and feelings.
- _____ 9/ I am afraid that if I begin to express my feelings to my partner, I will
lose control of my emotions.
- _____ 10/ I am concerned that if I open up with my partner, he or she will use
this information against me in the future.
- _____ 11/ If I expressed my true feelings, I would regret what I said latter.

Note: This checklist will help you to focus on the specific psychological or inter personal problems that block effective communication.

The source: Love is never enough: How couples can over come misunderstandings, resolve conflicts, and solve relationship problems through cognitive therapy by Aaron T.

Beck, Page 113.

APPENDIX D

PROBLEMS IN THE STYLE OF COMMUNICATION

Below is a list of behaviors that may cause problems. In the left hand column, rate the behaviors your partner uses with you. Use the following numbers to indicate frequency:

(0) doesn't apply (1) rarely (2) sometimes (3) frequently (4) all the time

In the middle column, indicate how much the problem bothers you:

(0) not at all (1) slightly (2) moderately (3) a great deal

In the right-hand column, rate the behaviors you use with your partner. Your partner should also complete this questionnaire.

Communication Style

	_____	_____	_____
	Your partner with you	This bothers me	You with your partner
1/ Doesn't listen	_____	_____	_____
2/ Talks too much	_____	_____	_____
3/ Doesn't talk enough	_____	_____	_____
4/ Interrupts	_____	_____	_____
5/ Too vague	_____	_____	_____

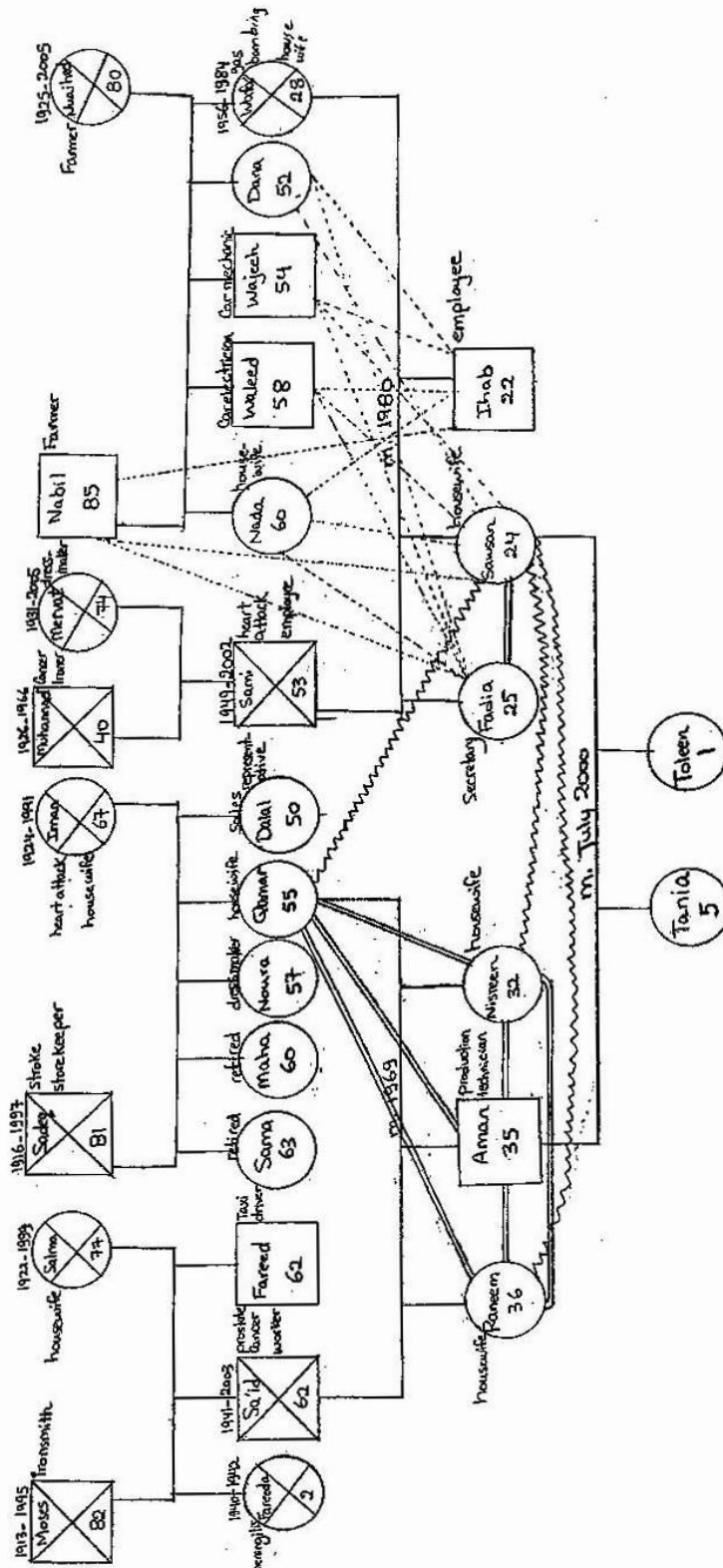
6/ Never gets to the point	_____	_____	_____
7/ Doesn't nod or indicate agreement	_____	_____	_____
8/ Doesn't utter listening signals (for example, "mm-hmm")	_____	_____	_____
9/ Doesn't give mate a chance to talk	_____	_____	_____
10/ Won't discuss touchy subjects	_____	_____	_____
11/ Talks too much about touchy subjects	_____	_____	_____
12/ Asks too many questions	_____	_____	_____
13/ Doesn't ask enough questions	_____	_____	_____
14/ Shuts mate up	_____	_____	_____
15/ Withdraws when upset	_____	_____	_____

Notes: There is no absolute score that indicates when you need to be concerned about communication. However, if you are aware of difficulties in this area, this checklist will enable you and your partner to pinpoint them and start to improve them. Keep in mind that your perception of your partner's behavior may be incorrect or exaggerated.

The source: Love is never enough: How couples can overcome misunderstandings, resolve conflicts, and solve relationship problems through cognitive therapy by Aaron T. Beck, Page 112.

APPENDIX E

THE FAMILY MAP OF HANNAN FAMILY



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